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VOL. XXX No. 42 OCTOBER 18, 1947 FIFTEEN CENTS

Allan Nevins, author of "Ordeal of the Union." *(See page 9)*

Mammon's Little Baby...

By MARGARET HALSEY

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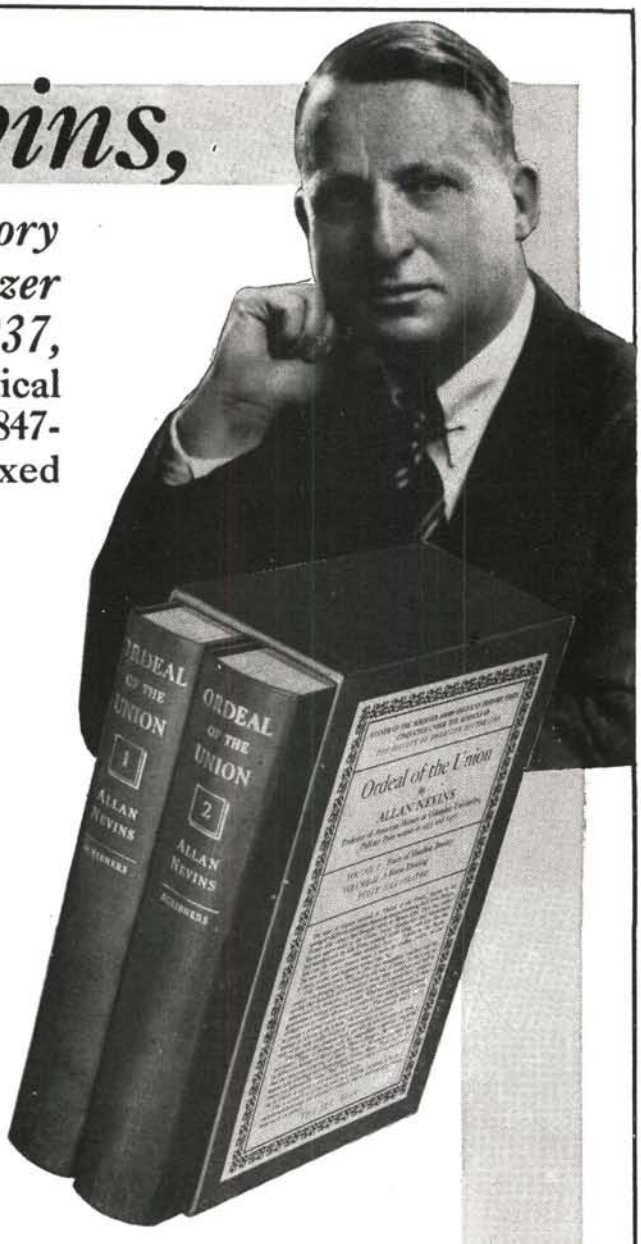
Allan Nevins,

Professor of American History at Columbia University, Pulitzer Prize winner in 1933 and 1937, reviews and reinterprets a critical period in American History, 1847-1857—the fateful years which climaxed in Civil War.



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October 18, 1947

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TRADE Winds

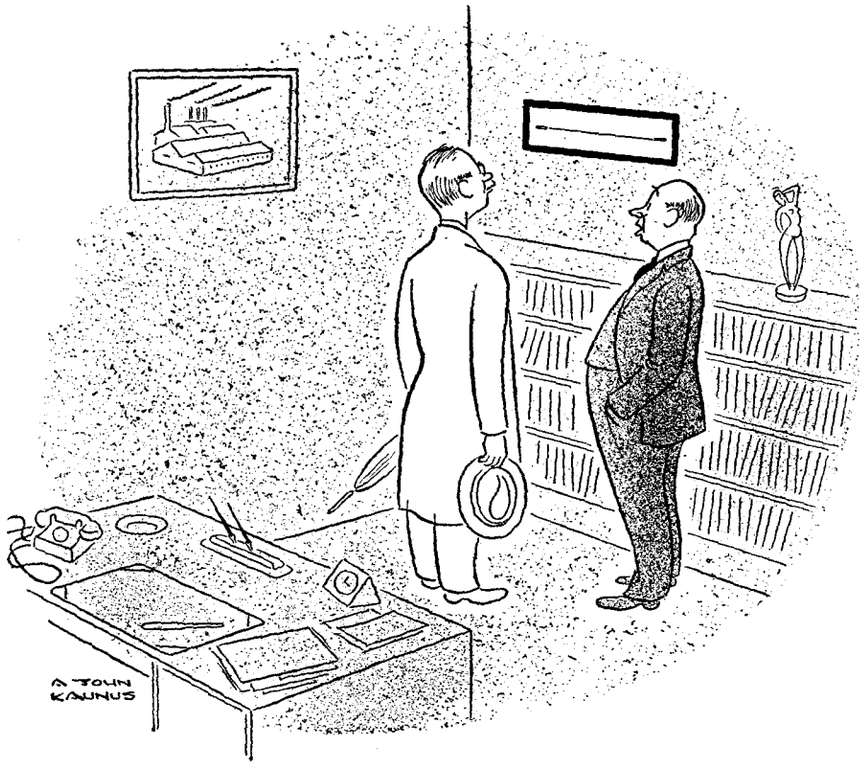
THE FACT THAT Charles Scribner's Sons celebrated its one hundredth anniversary last year might lead some people to suspect that its official roster is cluttered up with a lot of doddering old fogies getting their gray beards caught in the letter presses and roll-top desks. The truth of the matter is that in the past two years it has built up for key positions virtually an entirely new varsity squad, so very young that you rather worry about exposing the boys to those four-letter words in Hemingway's novels.

Norman Snow, the director of the trade department, graduated from Yale in 1934, and came to Scribner's via Dodd, Mead, Doubleday, and a four-year hitch in the U. S. Army. Prominent in the editorial department are Lewis Brogue, Dartmouth '34, and Burroughs Mitchell, Bowdoin '36. The sales force includes Barry Howard, Cornell '36, David Crevistón, U. of Florida '36, and Mark Collis, recently returned from four years' service in the Air Corps. Charles Scribner, Jr., Princeton '43, is advertising manager. George McCorkle, Yale '42, is his assistant. H. C. Roberts, Princeton '36, is assistant manager of the Scribner Press. Barbara Emerson, Goucher '42, is the publicity director.

Proud as a peacock of his array of fledglings is Whitney Darrow, sixty-six himself, but the youngest of the lot in spirit. Whitney began working for the Princeton University Press in 1905, came to Scribner's in 1917, and except for two minutes every Armistice Day, hasn't been quiet one moment since. There are not many men who are prominent in publishing today who have not sought the advice of Whitney Darrow at one time or another—and they all profited by it.

One of Whitney's rare failures came when he volunteered recently to help the subscription set department collect a long overdue account in the corn belt. He wrote a folksy letter, signed personally, that concluded, "What would all your neighbors think if our salesman came along one day and repossessed your beautiful set of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson?" A week later his letter came back, with this message scrawled across the bottom: "I have asked all of my neighbors and they think it would be a lousy trick."

The last time I saw Whitney Darrow he was thumbing happily through a copy of the new edition of Tom Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel," with illustrations by Edward Goursline. "You know," he said, "that Goursline is Max Perkins's son-in-law. He's married to Max's daughter, Elizabeth." "That reminds me," I remarked. "Everybody is wondering who is going to replace Max Perkins." Whitney's eyes clouded, and he answered crisply, "*Nobody* can replace Max Perkins." . . .



"That's the shoestring I started with."

THE THIRD CHARLES SCRIBNER to occupy the president's chair has held the post since 1932. Portraits of his grandfather, founder of the firm, and his father, adorn the wall of his office; the fourth Charles Scribner is just down the hall. The full story of the achievements and experiences of this royal family of the publishing world is told with verve by Roger Burlingame in "Of Making Many Books." . . . Charlie Scribner is rarely perturbed by the perplexing problems of the book business although the death of Max Perkins put an additional burden on his shoulders. When the time approaches for his daily dash for the train home to Far Hills, however, his subordinates notice a growing look of concern on his face. His object, and that of a few other commuters and friends, is to get settled in the club car and launched on a rubber of bridge before an elderly acquaintance, who plays abominably, manages to horn in on the game. The plan has never succeeded to date, but they all keep trying. Their present theory is that the unwelcome contestant hides in the washroom of the car all day while it stands in the yards, for he is on hand to greet them no matter how early they arrive at the station.

Charlie Scribner drew him as a partner one day last week, nearly fainted when he heard him bid six no-trump, but felt reassured when he saw the lay of the cards. "Even *he* can't miss this one," whispered Scribner to an onlooker—but he was wrong. His partner revoked. Scribner swears that another day the fellow absent-mindedly picked up two hands by mistake, carefully arranged the twenty-six cards, and bid, "One spade." . . .

AUGUST DERLETH, of Arkham House, has whipped up a new anthology of horror stories called "The Night Side," to make long January nights more shivery. Derleth has specialized in this field so long he now is known as the Real Macabre, with office windows tightly shuddered, and a cadaver for receptionist on the groan floor. When Western Union delivers a telegram, Derleth opens the boy. . . . The *Herald Tribune* magazine editor is posing this problem to a long and varied list of prominent folk: "Attempt to think of yourself as equipped

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"Secretary Marshall just addressed the United Nations Assembly . . . the Indonesian situation is just about what it was . . . amalgamated herring choppers are out on strike . . . Dick Tracy has things under control . . . stocks fell off slightly."

with two pieces of film and able, under ideal conditions, to take photographs of any events in all recorded human history. What would you picture for the future history of mankind?" A tabulation of the answers should make fascinating reading! What two events would *you* select? . . . Herbert Bayard Swope stopped a group of sophisticates cold the other evening by demanding the first names of Mesdames Du Barry and Pompadour. While everybody was thumbing through the Encyclopedia he had won from "Information Please," for a similar request for useless data, Swope made an observation that deserves repetition: "A Lucy Stone gathers no boss." . . .

"MAY I HELP YOU?"

By "A Bookseller Who Knows."

His heart is light as he beholds
A customer approaching—
His bland urbanity unfolds,
His fervor needs no coaching.

He girds his loins (a metaphor!)
With artful smirk adorning
His features, he bestows the store
Along with his Good Morning!

He urges bargains which are dear—
He woos her indecision—
An ardent, anxious cavalier
Beyond her raptest vision.

And should she fancy to decline
The items he's been showing,
His suavity betrays no sign
Of where he hopes she's going. . . .

THE CHICAGO NEWS has resumed its Wednesday book page. . . . Newport is in a state of literary siege. Jean Stafford is dissecting it for *Life*, Vincent McHugh for *Holiday*, and Cleveland Amory for *Harper's*. All three will have a job living up to the standard set many years ago by Edith Wharton in her superb novel, "The Age of Innocence." . . . "Project One" is the working title of a new national magazine to be edited by Julian Bach, Jr. and Sidney Carroll. It is designed to cover the entire field of American culture and entertainment in prose and pictures, and will devote considerable space to books and authors. . . . When a literary critic met the national chess champion, he opened the conversation by asking, "Led any good rooks lately?" . . . The new Doubleday Book Shop, at 52nd Street and Fifth Avenue, will be the most elaborate and complete in the chain. When it opens early in 1948, the branch a block further up will be discontinued. . . .

THE SALES MANAGER of one of the country's biggest paper mills played host recently to a group of book designers and manufacturing men from a dozen publishing houses. The food was excellent, the wine flowed freely, and when the sales manager arose to speak he was greeted with a salvo of applause.

"Fellows," he said with a catch in his voice, "just fifteen years ago today our mill received its very first paper order from a book publisher."

Somebody in the rear of the room caused a near-riot by hollering, "When are you going to fill it?"

BENNETT CERF.

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DON'T START *this book on the train to Cleveland . . . You'll end up in Chicago.*

DON'T START *this book at all if you like your stories sweet and gentle . . .*

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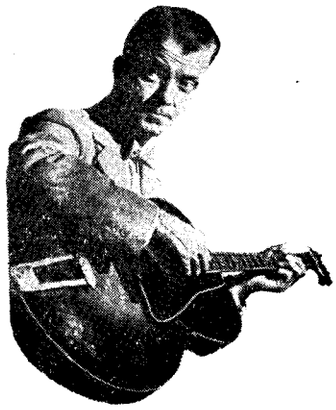

We call it Advertising

IMAGINE our editorial "we" in Buffalo, New York, around eight years ago on the wrong side of town. We are sitting in a small bar while some migrant potato diggers put nickels in a juke box for hot jazz and various sad Spanish songs that remind them of the Caribbean. We are splitting a fifteen cent bottle of beer with a tall, dark, dreamy-looking man who peers out of thick glasses and thinks Fats Waller invented the twentieth century. He thinks Beethoven was good too, but it's a shame Beethoven never heard Bix Beiderbecke.

The bar is small and dirty and dark and when the potato diggers run out of nickels a couple of men get up from a booth and walk out to the back room and pick up their instruments and play. One of them plays a banjo and one has a horn and somebody sits down at a piano. There isn't any music around to read from but they couldn't read it anyway. They play what is currently called swing (this is 1939, remember) but what is really jazz, something that came slow up the Mississippi and over to Chicago and then by a great, storied leap to Europe. It's a kind of music that skipped the concert halls of Buffalo and got into these places with fifteen cent bottles of beer.

Three years later we got to the Big Town and heard a Fats Waller program at Carnegie Hall. Some of America's top-flight jazz men had arranged it as a tribute to Fats, and Eddie Condon was one of them. He saw it a lot closer than we did and this is part of what he has to say about it in his autobiography, WE CALLED IT MUSIC:

> **When I arrived at the hall there were more people backstage than in the orchestra; Fats' friends had dropped in to wish him luck. He had a drink with each of them. When the curtain went up someone turned him around, pointed the way, and he walked on stage and sat down at the piano. He played from his own compositions for an opening group.**
>
> **For the second group he was to play spirituals on the organ. He did, but I noticed that every once in a while he slipped into George Gershwin's "Summertime". The third group consisted of improvisations, and again I detected "Summertime". After an intermission of twenty-three minutes—one minute to get Fats off the stage and twenty-two to get him back on — he played his London Suite and some variations on a Tschaikovsky theme. Afterward Oscar Levant said: "I never realized until I heard Fats how much Tschaikovsky owes to Gershwin."**

In 1939 we didn't know much about the men who made jazz. We didn't examine the music but we knew it was music. When a horn clenched itself on a long ride we could imagine something permanent behind its immediate spontaneity, and after that Carnegie Hall concert we got to know more about the men behind it. But we didn't have a round, full picture of jazz until Eddie Condon's manuscript came into the office. Eddie is a banjo-player, not a writer, and so this is his story as he told it to Tom Sugrue. Sugrue listened and put it down and added sections of background information that stretch back to Storyville, New Orleans, where jazz was marked off into twelve city blocks in 1897. He brings it up to February, 1946, when Eddie Condon and his boys tried to hire Washington's Constitution Hall. They didn't get to play in Constitution Hall, but since 1942 they've played concerts in New York City's Town Hall, and will again this year . . . which means that jazz looks good in a white tie.

Tom Sugrue tells Eddie's story in a kind of racy, first-person talk that sounds as though the great Ring Lardner were back at his typewriter again. The title grew from the book itself, as right titles do grow. It means those long, long years before a formal concert was thought of, in Chicago, in New York, in Buffalo, in little towns throughout the country, when the men who played jazz and a few who listened were the only ones who called it music. Jazz was so close to a lot of things not talked about on Sunday that people wouldn't call it music. It was Saturday night stuff and it came in by the back door. Also, the men who played it didn't lead regular lives.

The lives they did lead are in Eddie's book. He has played with the best of them for the past twenty-five years, they call him Mr. Jazz, and what he says about them amounts to a running stream of memories that are jazz insofar as it's possible to put it down on paper. Irving Kolodin, music critic, author, editor of SRL's *Recordings* writes:

> **Condon has given us the book which explains the jazz musician if not jazz. Since nobody can do the latter it's a blessing someone has done the former.**

That tall, dreamy man with the glasses is going to have a copy of WE CALLED IT MUSIC. Even though he knew it was music before 1939, he will like to be reminded. He will also notice one important thing about this book, that it's for both sides of the tracks, and that reading it is not only fun but a good way of remembering that any side of the tracks is good, depending on what you hear from it.

WE CALLED IT MUSIC

A GENERATION OF JAZZ

by Eddie Condon

narration by Thomas Sugrue

illustrated with photographs **$3.00**

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Mammon's Little Baby . . .

MARGARET HALSEY

Margaret Halsey

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In* SRL, *Sept. 20, Louis Bromfield recorded his concern for current American writing, and wrote out a detailed diagnosis of literary sickness. Among the symptoms and causes he listed the lush historical novel, mediocre writing, intellectual fatigue, and the difficulty of making fiction sound as exciting as the daily newspaper. This week, Margaret Halsey, author of a series of provocative books, including "With Malice Towards Some" and "Some of My Best Friends Are Soldiers," replies to Mr. Bromfield in* The Saturday Review's *continuing diagnostic symposium on American writing.*

MR. LOUIS BROMFIELD has averred at some length that current literary production is on the down-grade. Down from what? Mr. Bromfield does not say, but perhaps he would feel more cheerful about current literary production if he took a less peripheral view of it.

Mr. Bromfield begins his piece with the by-now-standard groan over the popularity of trashy, escapist historical novels. He does not, however, mention any of them by name. The best sellers he singles out for his urbane disapproval are, oddly enough, "End As a Man," "The Story of Mrs. Murphy," "Kingsblood Royal," and "Gentleman's Agreement" — volumes which could only be considered escapist by someone having his teeth drilled.

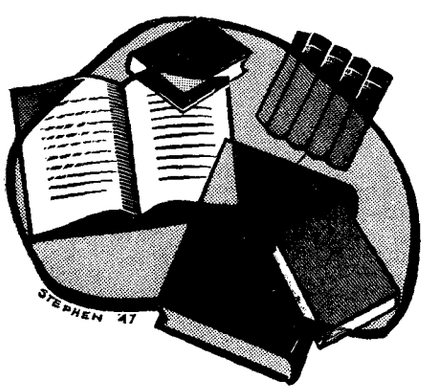
While Mr. Bromfield is urbane, he is certainly not urban. He finds "The Story of Mrs. Murphy" "loud-mouthed," "sensational," and empty of content. But to American city dwellers, the derelict Jimmy Murphy is exactly the opposite of sensational. He is commonplace. He sprawls on our sidewalks and crumples on our subway steps, and since our welfare systems are not yet geared to the concept of alcoholism as a disease, he is always with us.

Natalie Anderson Scott's prose style certainly leaves almost everything to be desired, but nothing could be easier to understand than the success of "The Story of Mrs. Murphy." Alcoholism is on the increase in the United States. Even more on the increase is the number of Mr. Bromfield's and my compatriots who are worried about how much, under present-day tensions, they drink.

The hideous drunks who collapse in city doorways are terrifying on two counts. One, they are mysterious —how do people get like that?—and two, they initiate in the beholder a frightening self-identification — could it happen to someone like me? Miss Scott illuminates the mystery and dispels the identification which was based on it. She helps the reader to move from terror and hatred to understanding and compassion.

Mr. Bromfield does not specify what he means by a "great" book, but he is no doubt right that "The Story of Mrs. Murphy" does not fall into that category. However, if the culture seems to induce alcoholism, it has also evoked a book which brings that infirmity into focus for the uninstructed and nervous citizenry. That is a benign rather than a malevolent phenomenon, and it should not be brushed away as cheap or sham.

Mr. Bromfield's quarrel with "Gentleman's Agreement" and "Kingsblood Royal" is that they are "timely" and that the characterization is unreal. Except that he appears to use it in a derogatory sense, one cannot quite tell what he means by "timely." But if he means ephemeral and unimportant, then he had better buy some canned goods and duck into the nearest storm cellar. One way or another, Mr. Bromfield is going to hear a lot more about Jews and Negroes before he begins to hear a lot less.



As to the characterization in the above two books, Mr. Bromfield does not realize that it is almost impossible to make anti-Semites and Negrophobes sound real in books, because they are not real in real life. Their talk is inflexibly stereotyped, and they never for a second listen to what anybody else has to say. If you can get past their impermeable façade to the stresses and starvations underneath, then you get a picture that is real, all right, but Mr. Bromfield would be the first to call it sensational. Perhaps, however, Mr. Bromfield should not be held responsible for knowing this, since it is not an area that has ever tempted him to the use of his inescapable talent.

It seems to me that Mr. Bromfield's failure to evaluate "Kingsblood Royal" and "Gentleman's Agreement" with anything like accuracy lies in his failure to understand that books do not stand alone, but are almost always related to other books. Some day there will be an oasis in history in which an American writer can produce a "great" book about that death struggle between American irresponsibility and American Puritan ideal-

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ism which revolves around anti-Semitism and Negro-white relations. But that oasis will never be reached unless the way is paved for it by plays like "Deep Are the Roots" and "On Whitman Avenue" and books like "Gentleman's Agreement," "Kingsblood Royal," and Gwethalyn Graham's "Earth and High Heaven."

Great books are not handed to a civilization on a silver platter. They have to be earned. We will never have a great book on race relations in the United States until we first have some great race relations. A writer has the obligation to be a little ahead of his time, but he cannot be so far ahead that he is completely out of earshot.

Mr. Bromfield, though niggardly in parceling out credit, is quick to assign blame for what he considers the present deplorable state of American letters. Authors, book reviewers, Hollywood, and book clubs come in for a share of his reproaches. Of book reviewers, he says, "Too many of them possess a view and understanding of life and human values bordered by a two-room flat and the nearest bar." Mr. Bromfield is—to put it charitably—astigmatic. The only trouble with contemporary book reviewers is that they have to do too much work for too little money, and they do not enjoy one-tenth of the prestige in the commonwealth that falls to a budding personnel manager or a $30,000-a-year "company man." Not the least of their occupational hazards is Mr. Bromfield himself, who is right in there casting the first stone. In view of Mr. Bromfield's quaint notion about the limitations of a two-room apartment, he is certainly fortunate not to have been around when a rather distinguished viewer-of-life turned up in a manger.

THE reason for Mr. Bromfield's astigmatism is, I think, his failure to understand that literature is not disparate. It is inextricably tied up with the culture in which it exists and it follows the same general channels which are followed by all the other activities in the culture. Mr. Bromfield deplores mass production, standardization of output, and gravitation of money to the top in the book business—as represented by the book clubs and Hollywood. But books are standardized, mass produced, and cartelized in this country because steel and automobiles and disposable tissues and Post Toasties are standardized, mass produced, and cartelized. For Mr. Bromfield to think that books can operate as a cottage industry, manned by starry-eyed medieval guilds, while every other productive activity in the country moves toward cartelization as fast as it can get there, is sheer boyish nonsense.

There is nothing especially wrong and deplorable about current literary output that is not especially wrong and deplorable about all other American activities. Writers, young or old, take Hollywood money for the same reason that lawyers and statisticians take corporation money. They were taught as school children that every self-respecting, red-blooded American makes and takes as much money out of a given situation as he possibly can, barring the risk of prison.

Taking large amounts of money is a sanctioned activity in our society, as Mr. Bromfield knows of his own experience. Writers take book club money because they are Americans, as well as writers, and many Americans have a neurotic terror of poverty—even, or maybe especially, when they have never actually experienced it. Americans depend on money, rather than on books, for the smooth operation of their self-esteem, and writers can no more escape this cultural conditioning than can plumbers and real estate men.

When Americans have learned to examine a little more closely than they do now the real—as opposed to the ostensible—aims of their behavior, the over-all behavior patterns of the country will change for the better, and current literature will change along with them. Meantime, a book like "Peace of Mind" brings to thousands of people hints of a new, modern, and scientific approach to behavior; and books like "Gentleman's Agreement" and "Kingsblood Royal"—fictionized pamphlets though they may be—challenge popular attitudes and reassert the national ethic.

Mr. Bromfield refers to the American reader as "hapless" because the book clubs and Hollywood are stifling epic literature in the womb. For a man who has been sleeping with a large audience under his pillow for several decades, this is a surprisingly untutored remark. Writers and readers are mutually interactive. The reader is a human being, and like all human beings who are not psychotic, he sometimes tries to grapple with his problems and sometimes tries to run away from them. This not-very-startling ambivalence is more or less directly reflected in the sale of books. If Mr. Bromfield had a better working knowledge of the extent of anti-Semitic and anti-Negro feeling in this republic, he would realize that the success of "Gentleman's Agreement" and "Kingsblood Royal" was as much a triumph for the reading public as it was for Mr. Hobson and Mr. Lewis.

I have alluded to Mr. Bromfield's peripheral approach to literary criticism. The question really engaging his attention is not the dearth of "great" books, but the problem of the writer's integrity in present-day America. How can a person exercise a traditionally individualistic trade in a society where almost all the other activities are non-individualistic? Mr. Bromfield's comments about Hollywood and book clubs are superficial and not very helpful, but perhaps we ought to thank him for raising the whole issue of literary independence in an environment committed to chain stores.

NO ONE, of course, can provide a writer, or anybody else, with a blueprint for the preservation of his integrity. If he really possesses integrity, as distinguished from vanity—and our schools and churches actually do produce people with integrity—he will find ways and means to preserve it himself. There are, however, a few time-saving short cuts. I do not wish to be understood as quarrel-

(Continued on page 34)

My Current Reading

SRL's report on the current reading of well-known figures comes this week from **Leverett Saltonstall**, ex-Governor of Massachusetts and now Senator from that state. Like many another statesman, Senator Saltonstall wrote us, "I spend most of my reading hours on treatises or arguments pro or con on legislation." Late evenings he reads *Time*, *Life*, or *The Saturday Evening Post*. Nevertheless, he has had time to sample the following titles:

INSIDE U.S.A., *by John Gunther*
FOOTNOTES ON NATURE, *by John Kieran*
LYDIA BAILEY, *by Kenneth Roberts*
TOGETHER, *by Katherine Tupper Marshall*
THE HAPPY PROFESSION, *by Ellery Sedgwick*
THE LIFE OF JUDAH TOURO, *by Leon Huhner*

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History. *The most striking development in the writing of American history during the last two decades has been a new and fruitful interest in social history. The boring accounts of Presidents, battles, and dates of traditional American history have been given fresh meaning by studies of economic causes, trends in fashion, the rise of labor, the function of newspapers, prevailing ideas, class structures. Lloyd Morris's "Postscript to Yesterday," reviewed below, is an example of the new social and intellectual history. Professor Wertenbaker's "The Puritan Oligarchy" (reviewed in* SRL, *Oct. 4), and now Allan Nevins's well-rounded "Ordeal of the Nation" represent the fine end-product of the new trend towards a fuller, richer conception of American history.*

The Failure of Statesmanship

ORDEAL OF THE UNION. Volume I, FRUITS OF MANIFEST DESTINY. Volume II, A HOUSE DIVIDING. By Allan Nevins. New York: Charles Scribners Sons. 1947. 593, 590 *pp.* $10.

Reviewed by
ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.

WITH THE publication of the first two volumes of "Ordeal of the Union," Allan Nevins has brought back into the writing of American history qualities which in recent years seem to have disappeared. It has been a long time since a historian has marked off an epoch in our past and settled down to a detailed, readable, and single-handed reconstruction in as many volumes as the job demands. The works of James Ford Rhodes and Herman von Holst now molder on the shelf; Edward Channing's massive history never enjoyed the vogue it deserved; and, since Channing, we have become a legion of specialists, turning out monographs or concentrating on particular themes but rarely attempting the broad, inclusive narrative on the classical scale.

"Ordeal of the Union" is thus a return to an older tradition. Mr. Nevins has picked, of course, the great internal crisis of our history—the single instance thus far when our political resources were inadequate to our domestic perplexities—and his theme is the failure of statesmanship which compelled the resort to violence in 1861. The two volumes under review—"Fruits of Manifest Destiny" and "A House Dividing"—carry the story of a nation in travail from 1847 to 1857. A third volume will carry the tale to the summer of 1861.

The basic historical motion, as Mr. Nevins sees the period, was toward the unification of the country; and the conflict between North and South was a function of this broader movement. The impulses of technology and economics were dictating a nationalism which would smash the sectional peculiarities it could not subdue. Of all such peculiarities, slavery was the most intractable. Its intractability produced sectional tensions increasingly irreconcilable, and passion soon drove reason and judgment out of political discussion. A great political leader might have broken through the emotional fabric, might have shocked the nation into a sense of the disaster toward which it was drifting. But between Polk and Lincoln the White House sheltered a succession of mediocrities. The craft, blown helplessly onto the rocks, split in twain.

On this great question of our history—could the Civil War have been avoided?—Mr. Nevins thus takes a middle-of-the-road position. He does not go so far as Professor Craven and Professor Randall in blaming the tragedy on the gratuitous agitation of meddling propagandists; he knows too well that agitation cannot agitate unless it corresponds to existing needs and anxieties. Yet he implies constantly that a longer period of tinkering and adjustment might have averted conflict:

> The primary task of statesmanship in this era was to furnish a workable adjustment between the two sections, while offering strong inducements to the Southern people to regard their labor system not as static but evolutionary, and equal persuasions to the Northern people to assume a helpful rather than scolding attitude.

Mr. Nevins's sympathies are consequently with Henry Clay rather than with President Taylor and William H. Seward in the fight over the Compromise of 1850. He does regard the Kansas-Nebraska Act as a wanton reopening under Southern pressure of the slavery issue in the territories; yet he feels that this issue was "prac-

THE AUTHOR: It takes more than a myriad accurate details to recapitulate a true impression of history, says Allan Nevins, who pocketed Pulitzer biography prizes in 1932 and 1937, respectively, for "Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage" and "Hamilton Fish—The Inner History of the Grant Administration," and last year won the $10,000 Scribner American history award for "Ordeal of the Union." Five years' sole research buttresses volumes I and II of the "Ordeal." Mr. Nevins, who eats, sleeps, and teaches history, plans several more, of which volume III is well along. His greatest joy is his Vermont farm, five miles from the nearest telephone and distracting current events. He was born at Camp Point, Ill., first distinguished himself as one of the *New York Evening Post's* youngest editors, after taking his M.A. in 1913, from the University of Illinois—subject of a chronicle in 1917. He did the *Post's* ontogeny in 1922, resigned in '23. He also wrote editorials for *The Nation* and got married. Two daughters exhibit "no especial inclination for history." From 1923-25 he was literary editor of the *New York Sun*, wrote a Colonial history, started reviewing for *SRL*, and joined the *New York World*, where, less time off for a year's teaching at Cornell, he remained until 1931, when he accepted an American history professorship at Columbia, his present podium. Between times he sandwiched in two pedagogical visits to the British Isles, a year as OWI special representative in Australia and New Zealand (1943-44), and a deluge of literary monuments. Among them are the rewritten and enlarged "Frémont, Pathmaker of the West," and a definitive biography of John D. Rockefeller. Just back from his second term as United States Chief Public Affairs Officer in London, he recommends Britain's spartan diet as healthful and invigorating. "We'd all be better off if we ate less," says Mr. Nevins, who has a springy step and shows no fat.

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tically settled again by the end of 1858." The trouble then was that passions had been roused beyond hope of recall—at a time when, with leadership and time, the South might have been persuaded to free the slaves, the North refrain from its favorite posture of censure without responsibility.

The issue here posed—what policy would have averted war—goes down to the question we formulate today in terms of appeasement or resistance. A future historian might say, much in Mr. Nevins's language, that the primary task of statesmanship in the 1930's was to furnish a workable adjustment between the U.S.A. and Germany, while offering strong inducements to the German people to abandon the police state, and equal persuasion to the Americans to help the Nazis rather than scold them. In essence, this is Mr. Wallace's current thesis about the Russians. Comparisons with the issues of the Civil War may perhaps be extreme: yet one must face the hard fact that closed and authoritarian social systems tend to create a compulsive intransigence in their own ruling groups—and that these groups may respond much more to a firmness which wakens them to some sense of actuality than to a forbearance which is never great enough and always to be discounted.

Jackson's iron determination in 1832 was clearly a more successful answer to Southern intransigence than Pierce's appeasement in 1854. One may question whether Mr. Nevins is correct in dismissing as futile the Jacksonian policy which Taylor wished to follow in 1850; whether Clay had sounder instincts than Seward in the debate over the Compromise; whether, given the psychosis at the top of the closed system, any solution was possible to the slavery question except violence.

Though "Ordeal of the Union" is political history in its general orientation, it is not political history in the arid sense of exclusve attention to legislation and administration. "Political history, to be intelligible and just," John Richard Green wrote, "must be based on social history in its largest sense." Mr. Nevins uses this observation as his epigraph and lives up to it in his text. His range is broad, his comments are incisive, and he draws a masterly picture of American life in the Fifties—the social and cultural stirrings, the capitalist and the trade unionist, the entertainment in the theatres and the crime in dark corners of the badly-lit cities. His sections on plantation life deserve special note as an obviously earnest and fair-minded attempt to report a way of life about which it is impossible to write even today without provoking torrents of controversy.

Fair-mindedness, indeed, is the great characteristic of the book. Mr. Nevins propounds no sensational interpretations, no startling new theories. But he is abreast of the most recent scholarly research, and he brings a steady and impartial judgment to bear on most controverted questions—as in his cogent discussion of Stephen A. Douglas's motivation in bringing forward the Kansas-Nebraska Act. His assessment of blame in Preston Brooke's clubbing of Charles Sumner is similarly considered and just: "The provocation had indeed been great; but no provocation could excuse an act which assaulted not merely Sumner, but the dignity of the upper chamber, and the right of free parliamentary discussion."

"Ordeal of the Union" will immediately take its place as the standard history of the Fifties. It is ample, quick-moving, and accurate, and well deserves the Scribner $10,000 American history prize. I suppose it is too much to expect that the publisher should have shown its faith in the work to the extent of making its blurb-writer read it—and thus not to refer on the wrapper to Joshua R. Giddings, the anti-slavery leader, as "honest John Giddings." In this respect, as in all others, the millennium is still remote.

Hope and Disillusion

POSTSCRIPT TO YESTERDAY. By Lloyd Morris. New York: Random House. 1947. 475 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by DIXON WECTER

LLOYD MORRIS has written a useful book about the main drifts in American life and thought from the Bryan campaign of 1896 up to the present. It plows deeper and is more selective than Mark Sullivan's many volumes on the first half of this period, more literary and philosophical than Frederick L. Allen's excellent panorama of our yesterdays. It offers something to the reader in search of nostalgia—the scalloped oysters and calf's-foot jelly of the Nineties, the décor of Mrs. Astor's palace and Mrs. Jack Gardner's museum—but the chief stress falls upon writers and ideas, whether in journalism, literature, the theatre, classroom, judicial bench, or pulpit. A sequel promises to cover industry, labor, architecture, science, and politics. This topical arrangement has its advantages, but at the sacrifice of sweep and drama which belong always to the chronological.

"On whatever level one explored the vital culture of the United States during the period from 1896 to 1946," says Mr. Morris, "one was likely to find it recording an increasing disillusion. It condemned what actually existed. It affirmed something very different: what ought to be." I am not sure of the writer's meaning in this often-repeated theme of his book, his conviction that the tenor of American life and culture for the past fifty years reveals a steadily deepening skepticism and disenchantment. If recognition of the gap between what is and what ought to be constitutes disillusion, surely the idealist is always the most disillusioned of men. This hardly seems a proper definition. Moreover, is this state of mind a monopoly of our half-century? The Puritans, the Revolutionary generation, the age of Jackson, the era of Lincoln, the Populists and Progressives in the age of Confidence—all were dissatisfied with important aspects of the *status quo* and longed to remold it nearer the ideal.

Mr. Morris describes a widening rift between culture and daily life, the former following the way of the spirit, the latter bogged deeper and deeper in materialism. Yet these two, the ideal and the actual, have always kept some kind of equilibrium, as they jockeyed for position, and it is hard to see how any decisive surrender of "the dream of a good life

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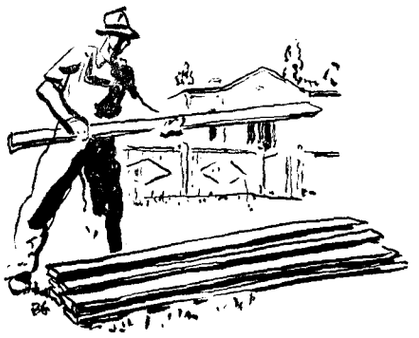
for the illusion of material success" has occurred since 1896. The Gilded Age of the early Seventies was as sordidly immersed as any. The times of Harding and Coolidge fell between the New Freedom and the New Deal. That still larger freedoms and newer deals will arise is a reasonably safe bet.

I feel that Mr. Morris has not proved his case. Practically no mention of the New Deal occurs in this book, even in its cultural aspects such as the unprecedented federal patronage of those arts and letters here under discussion. Whatever the score-sheet of trial and error, the New Deal for almost a decade did create an atmosphere of hopefulness and social experiment. This fact alone seems to challenge his thesis about our steadily growing disillusion, over fifty years of national existence when "faith gave way to disbelief in the possibility of achieving that more abundant life for all." Instead of a gradual recognition between 1896 and 1946 that, "as the years passed, the old American dream took on the quality of a mirage," the movement appears more truly to be that of a pendulum. Sometimes our critics discover the Promise of American Life and the assurance that "America was promises"; at other times, as with Lowell in the Presidency of Grant, they begin to write bitter things about the Land of Broken Promise. Incidentally, this seesaw is apt to make penultimate eras closer in sympathy than neighboring ones. Henry Adams, permanently disenchanted by the Gilded Age, later wrote a book just suited to the post-war taste of the next lost generation. Most earnest writers of the 1930's discovered a closer kinship with the muckrakers of Upton Sinclair's and Steffens's heyday than with their flippant elder brothers of the Jazz Age. These oscillations will continue so long as the mechanism of a nation's critical mind swings free.

At Mr. Morris's terminal point, the later 1940's, it is not yet clear just what our barograph will show. The scramble for profits, the glut of luxuries, all the centrifugal impulses of self and faction — as distinguished from what L. P. Jacks once called "the peacefulness of being at war" —are visible in many quarters. But one classic post-war ingredient is lacking: complacency. Thanks to the atomic bomb and the truculent Russians we have not settled down into the old contours of ease; every Gallup poll mirrors anxiety and concern over our world responsibility. And while the Truman doctrine and Marshall plan seek to buttress world stability by helping weakened de-



mocracies with American dollars and food, on the domestic plane even Senator Taft and the right-wing Republicans demand legislative programs for the underprivileged more radical than anything promised by F. D. R. in 1932. Shall we say then (short of complete cynicism about plans and pledges) that as a people we have come to disbelieve in the more abundant life for all?

Heaven may not be our destination, but even in these times of converting mass into energy and alliances into enmity few of us are ready to concede that all the skids are greased for damnation. We are now tasting what Clemenceau once called "the grandeur and misery of victory" and of power, but the mass mood for all its tension certainly does not set in toward despair. Idealism and hopefulness lie just as deeply in the American marrow as, for example, technological know-how. That any drastic change has occurred in the American character these last fifty years, in its aspirations or basic faith, appears extremely doubtful.

Though one may question Mr. Morris's prelude and conclusion, between the covers much solid analysis remains. His discussion of yellow journalism as evolved from Pulitzer to Patterson, of magazines from Bok to DeWitt Wallace, is skilful and informed. In the history of thought, Williams James, Justices Holmes, and Brandeis, William Graham Sumner, John Dewey, Veblen, and the brothers Adams receive shrewd, vigorous, generally sympathetic treatment. The creation of biographical vignettes is the writer's specialty. Brief sketches of physical appearance, gesture, clothes, and decorative setting keep these characters from fading into disembodied minds, but such details are always kept under control. To his portraits of women — ranging from Mrs. Eddy to Texas Guinan, Edith Wharton to Aimee McPherson—Mr. Morris brings an extraordinary delicacy of perception and vividness. Often his comment is witty, as when he says, concerning the lovers of Isadora Duncan, that "they wanted an adventure, and were offered an education." He is equally at home as social historian and historian of ideas, with rare ability to communicate his knowledge with vivacity and savor. But as a literary critic, discussing Hemingway, Farrell, Steinbeck, O'Neill, and others, he appears more obvious in his judgments—less penetrating, for instance, than Alfred Kazin or Maxwell Geismar in their books about these same authors, which, by the way, should be added to Mr. Morris's bibliography.

His writing keeps to such a high standard for ease and clarity that an old pedant may be allowed to notice one blemish repeated page after page, namely the excessive use of "there was." A random passage will illustrate: "There were men who looked exactly like English hunting squires. It was odd, indeed, to find that there was a side of American society that was not so different from English life after all!" This mannerism, very common today, saps the vitality of verbs.

Also, throughout the book, Mr. Morris's use of quotations brings to mind an editorial problem mentioned before in the *SRL*. In the preface he remarks that quotes appear only in "a quotation of several connected sentences." Whether a reader likes to play the game of spotting hither and yon an unmarked sentence or two from Henry Adams about the Virgin, let us say, or from Edith Wharton and William Orton on women's clubs—or tends to react with mild allergy to the scattering of all this disengaged pollen—one reviewer doesn't pretend to say. (I gladly grant him a few bits from "The Saga of American Society," a book which I thought buried in oblivion, but would remind him that, as stated in those pages. Colonel Mann's "Fads and Fancies" of the Four Hundred was not "a handsome annual," but a single effort of that venerable blackmailer issued in 1905.) We all quote, parody, or adapt more or less unconsciously from reading, and famous sayings pass almost everywhere without acknowledgment. Van Wyck Brooks, a highly skilled craftsman, some years ago helped start the vogue for silent quotations, from Emerson or Thoreau or Alcott, woven into his critique of those authors; and the new allusiveness of poetry since "The Waste Land" is still another story. But unbranded mavericks in prose, owning no tie with their original context, seem a little more dubious. The thought is disturbing. How, for example, can this or any other quibbling reviewer tell when he is really getting under the hide of a book and not merely clipping off a bit of borrowed plumage which might even be—heaven help us—his own?

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Personal History.

Time was when a man could write his autobiography at fifty, then die in peace. But life has lengthened, the world has grown more complex, and the new interest in social history and the social sciences has so enriched the possible subject-matter that for an active mind there is no end to memorializing but inevitable decease. Today we have the serial autobiography, with continuations at forty, sixty, and again, perhaps, at eighty or ninety. With rare artistry Sir Osbert Sitwell now carries his memories through a third volume, and Burton Rascoe, whose opening autobiography "Before I Forget," published a decade ago, was notable for its energy and frankness, has now brought forth his second.

In a Rococo World

GREAT MORNING! By Sir Osbert Sitwell. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press. 1947. 360 pp. $4.

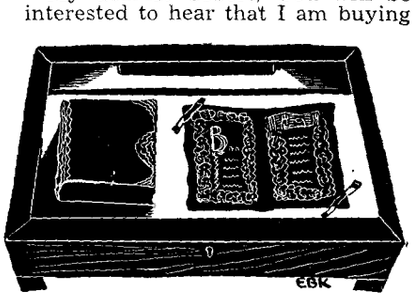
Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THE THIRD volume of Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography maintains and, indeed, improves upon the high standard set by the previous two. Recording the last years before the catastrophe of 1914, it presents us with a world which seems to spin gently between the arbitrary but efficient poles of the Beautiful and the Absurd. This world may be slightly off balance, since its creator's awareness of the beautiful is perhaps not quite so exquisite as his response to the absurd; it may be neither the most spacious nor the most significant of worlds; but of its kind (which is rococo) it is as nearly perfect as such a world could be. The admitted purpose of "Great Morning!" being entertainment rather than instruction, let us begin by saying that here is superior entertainment.

The leading actor in these pages is not so much the autobiographer as his father, Sir George Reresby Sitwell. This unusual baronet seems to represent, in a most delicate and deadly way, some of the more attractive features of the absurd life. By this I mean a life at once wildly at variance with its surroundings and at the same time almost universally accepted by its surroundings as something faintly odd but by no means abnormal. A chief feature of the absurd life (aside from its conviction that it is not absurd at all) is that it is more charming in retrospect than while it still has power to damage and to disarrange. Another feature — at least where English absurdity is concerned — is that it bears a superficial resemblance to other and more national phenomena, some of them contemporary with it, some farther in the past. Thus the portrait of Sir George Sitwell, as drawn by his son, reminds me at once of the Greville memoirs and of *Punch*. The reminders are vague and inexact, but they persist, and they could be multiplied almost indefinitely. In short, Sir George was very much a part of the English scene which, the more he tried to twist it out of all semblance to itself in accordance with some fantastic but by no means tasteless idea of his own, insisted all the more upon claiming him for *its* own.

Sir George was a scholar, "very loosely tethered to the modern world," who inhabited "a familiar world of knights and men-at-arms, of oubliettes and gothic, antique gaieties . . . of mazy climbing in genealogical trees, and hours spent in medieval Aleppo." He loved the Gothic life, or rather "the Gothic death," and a good part of his time was consumed in attempting to reshape such fragments of the English landscape as had fallen into his hands by inheritance or purchase. He lusted perpetually after piers and monoliths, after aqueducts and arches, after dams and lakes and cataracts and statuary; while anything ruined or forlorn exercised upon him an irresistible attraction. As he grew older, his schemes congregated in such profusion that he could not keep up with them. Some, none the less, were realized. On one memorable occasion he wrote:

> My dearest Osbert, You will be interested to hear that I am buying in your name the Castle of Acciaivoli (pronounced Accheeyawly) between Florence and Siena. . . . We shall be able to grow our own fruit, wine, oil—even champagne! . . . The purchase, apart from the romantic interest, is a good one, as it returns five per cent. . . . I do hope, my dear Osbert, that you will prove worthy of what I am trying to do for you, and will not pursue that miserable career of extravagance and selfishness which has already once ruined the family.



This characteristic missive puzzled its recipient. He was not conscious of having been extravagant. *He* had not bought a castle capable of housing more than 300 persons. *He* did not propose to grow his own champagne.

The absurd life, for its fulfilment, demands not only a very distinct taste but also considerable wealth; and it seems almost unnecessary to add that the Sitwell fortune appears to have been derived in part from Derbyshire coal royalties, so that the family may be said to have sprung not merely from the heart of England but from its very bowels. Sir George had the greatest respect for his wealth. His own extravagance he was able either to ignore or condone; but, with that puritanism which formed so persistent a strain in his singular composition, he turned upon the smallest expenditures of others a glacial, a disapproving eye. His object in life, as a father, was to see that none of his children derived any enjoyment from it. If he chose a career for them, it was the one for which they were most supremely unfitted. Thus Osbert Sitwell enters this book as an officer in the Brigade of Guards and leaves it as the candidate for a post in the Town Clerk's office at Scarborough.

Though the military life to which he had been condemned was often a nightmare to him, his was the kind of nature which could take advantage of anything in it which was either pleasant or preposterous. At his first introduction to a Cavalry mess, he broke the rule of two years' silence imposed upon all young officers, and chattering away to the two officers who glumly shared with him what appeared to be "an enormous illuminated cavern, filled with sparkling objects," observed upon their faces "the sort of glance which the Gorgon Sisters must every now and then have exchanged among themselves when a stranger was present and as yet unpetrified." After months of exile in the Gobi-like wastes of Aldershot, and among its brutal silences, he was able at last, as a Guards officer, to plunge into the life of pre-war London. Though his al-

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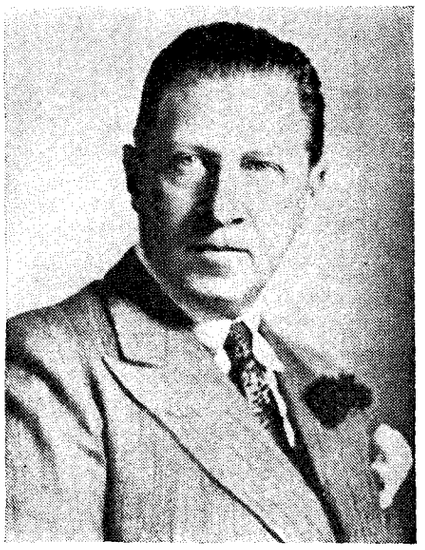
lowance was irregular and not large —it appears to have been based upon some mysterious computation whereby "the allowance customarily made to eldest sons by Lords of the Manor at the time of the Black Death" was translated by his father into modern English currency—he was young, well-connected, and the heir to a considerable fortune. It was enough to open wide those far from inaccessible doors.

For London society had lost that gloomy but distinct shape at which Henry Adams had once shuddered in the early 1860's; but had not acquired another. It was unfixed, easy-going, opulent, and doomed. To a young man of good birth and better stamina it may well have seemed heaven; but the fact remains that England was already depending upon the returns from her foreign investments, and London was assuming—as Paris under Napoleon III must have assumed —more and more the appearance of a shady financier's paradise. The ancient rituals fought in vain against that gross tide of careless and prodigious spending. Night after night, in house after house, "electric fans whirled on the top of enormous blocks of ice, buried in banks of hydrangeas, like the shores from which the bark departs for Cythera." The reader bends beneath the ghostly weight of roses and malmaisons, gardenias, orchids, stephanotis, peaches, figs, nectarines, and strawberries. Osbert Sitwell recalls that the inhabitants of the vast and putrefying slums which impinged everywhere upon this paradise would sometimes pelt its early morning musicales with rotten eggs and fish-heads; but from this he draws no conclusion. His record of London society is marked, not by an ignorance of, but by a total abstinence from, history.

His, indeed, is the antiquarian approach. He displays a precise and loving preoccupation with all such relics, monuments, and copious fragments as have struggled to the surface from an era buried deep beneath two wars. He can re-create the perfumes of this era, its furnishings, its clothes, its features—everything but its significance. The artists of the Russian Ballet, who bestowed an immortality upon that pre-war London, resist this approach—you cannot hold a Nijinsky or a Karsavina under a magnifying glass. The hostesses, on the other hand, do not. This is one of the few memoirs which do not turn these great ladies into mere dust and shadow. They do not exactly live; but they gleam from the pages like so many tenderly reconstructed objects of crystal or glass or porcelain. The record may be trivial on occasion, but it is never ponderous and it is never, never dull.



—*Elliott & Fry.*

"Sir Osbert Sitwell can re-create the perfumes of [an] era, its clothes, its features -- everything but its significance."

Moreover the long passages devoted in this manner to the life of a young man of fashion are persistently haunted—are, in fact, given a genuine movement and suspense—by the elder Sitwell. At any moment—like the restless parent of young Benjamin Constant — the terrible baronet may drag his son away from the delights of the city, and at such times, once again and never too infrequently, the book resumes its true inward life. It speaks well for the author's artistry and for the excellence of his taste that his record of this destructive parent is *almost* untouched by hatred or resentment; that it is marked by forbearance, affection, and even a kind of admiration. The portrait of Sir George and his entourage of Cassandras and Harpies, of Sir George and his children, of Sir George and his servants, is a masterpiece; and the fact that it portrays a life of astounding unimportance detracts nothing from its success. Sir George has little to say to the historian, little to the student of manners; little to offer anyone, really, except a bad example to parents. Even the antiquary, piecing together the jumbled and discordant fragments, counting the potsherds, appraising the coins, could at best report that he appears to have discovered a rare variety of late Victorian gentleman. Or would he classify the specimen as Edwardian? or neo-Georgian? The question is unnecessary because, when dealing with his father, Osbert Sitwell is never an antiquary. Only an artist and a wit could bring Sir George to life, and, let us admit it, a man who is both artist and wit has beautifully done so.

Fun— All the Way

WE WERE INTERRUPTED. By Burton Rascoe. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 342 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by JAMES GRAY

WHEN Theodore Roosevelt lay dying, his still restless and curious intelligence went scurrying back through the past, savoring the quality of his experience, sniffing at souvenirs of his fights and his triumphs. The comment that he was able to make by way of summing-up must stir a tremor of envy in a less eager soul. "It's been fun—all the way," he said.

At fifty-five, Burton Rascoe is by no means ready for such a final casting up of accounts. Having had a dozen lives already he is sure to have a dozen more before the close. But in two autobiographical volumes—"Before I Forget," published in 1937, and "We Were Interrupted," which is a book of the moment—he has paused to trace out the pattern of his memories. Each time he has repeated that his life has been fun—all the way.

No doubt Theodore Roosevelt would have said that his personal experience seemed rewarding because he had managed to follow his own counsel in espousing the philosophy of the strenuous life. Burton Rascoe also has the gift of strenuosity. But his capacity for enjoyment has been nourished by something more reliable than an academic philosophy.

For him the times have been absolutely right. He is the essential twentieth-century American, an individualist who has been allowed to take the ruggedness of his enterprise into the field of letters and make an undisputed place for himself. Rascoe never has winced under the impact of the far from temperate climate of our time as have so many other men who began bravely at almost the same moment but who since have faltered—Huxley, for example, and T. S. Eliot. Rascoe has enjoyed all the challenges and risks, all the opportunities and threats of sudden extinction. The quality of indomitability that one admires in him has shown itself in the conspicuous men of every age, of course. But what has made Rascoe's experience fortunate is the fact that his forthright eagerness has allowed him to march in perfect time with the tempo of our day. He has loved everything about our ways and they have all seemed easy and familiar.

The cocktail party, the stock market plunging, the unparalleled opportunity of the modern Proteus to turn up with a new job every six months

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—he has sniffed all those excitements gratefully and made our world his.

Essentially he has been a man of books but his own philosophy that literature is about life has made him come romping down out of the ivory tower to engage in all the economic, social, and ideological feuds of the minute. In the forty years since he began his career at the startlingly precocious age of fourteen, he has been critic, editorial writer, free-lance journalist, newspaper syndicate executive, editor, and, in addition, enthusiastic amateur of all the arts from tap dancing to painting.

He sees himself in this book as an embodiment of the enthusiasm of the 1920's. The period covered by this instalment of the autobiography is that put into parenthesis by two financial crises, the end of wartime prosperity in 1919 and the spectacular collapse of 1929. The mood of the decade which Rascoe perfectly shared was that of welcoming an entirely new age, one that was freer, bolder, more candid and critical than any America had known before.

Rascoe believed fervently in that newness and wanted to give its audacity a good, clear, ringing voice in the special realm of criticism. His two most conspicuous assignments were as literary editor of the *New York Tribune* (before it became the *Herald Tribune*) and editor of *The Bookman*. In both he saw his task as being that of making literature exciting. The fact that he was very nearly always in the midst of a feud shows how well he succeeded.

Among many other tasks that Rascoe has assumed is that of dramatic critic. The trade journal of the profession, *Variety*, prints a feature of which I'm sure Rascoe takes a disparaging view, called the Box Office Score in which it undertakes to estimate the reliability of critics on the basis of how many hits they praise. Nothing could be more unimportant from the standpoint of serious judgment. But if Rascoe's record as a literary critic were to be estimated in terms of the sober second thought that posterity is supposed to practise, it would be found to be good. In a great many instances reflective judgment has come to be in agreement with the opinion that he tossed off in the first flush of enthusiasm or of indignation.

Rascoe welcomed the freshness, the grace, and the half-revealed significance of Fitzgerald's talent when "This Side of Paradise" appeared. He ridiculed the mincing sterility of the New Humanism when it attempted to rap America's knuckles and call for decorum. He recognized the importance

—*From "Literary Lights," by Gene Markey.*

On the basis of sober second thought "Burton Rascoe's record as a literary critic . . . would be found to be good."

of "The Waste Land" at a moment when critical opinion generally was turning away in frightened distaste. He helped to find an American audience for neglected masterpieces like "South Wind" and encouraged the beginning writers who came to him. He swore death to the literary hypocrite no matter how great might be his reputation and was alert always to greet the unknown who came with an honest intention and a glowing mind.

In "On Native Grounds" Alfred Kazin has said that Rascoe "had, properly speaking, no ideas." Rascoe defends himself here by interpreting this to mean that he had "no fixed critical program, no intractable theory" and he points out, accurately, how many who have had such cramping ideologies to defend have failed to be good critics. A spinsterish concern with some special kind of correctness would have killed the rugged receptivity of Rascoe's loves.

However, this is less than fair to Kazin who feels that a critic must have a set of intellectual values in terms of which both good and bad may be interpreted fully, not merely accepted with enthusiasm or rejected with picturesque scorn. Nevertheless Rascoe's importance remains undiminished. His intuitive recognition of a book's honest and vigorous impulse enabled him to write out with a large sweeping hand sound judgments that he who ran might read. So many readers are on the run that there should be proper gratitude among the makers of a book for a Burton Rascoe who can catch their attention with his enthusiasm and make them listen.

Here is a man with an unappeasable appetite for living, one manifestation of which is his unappeasable appetite for the arts. In "We Were Interrupted" he has, with good sense, good temper, and good heart, encouraged his reader to sit and share both.

Poplars

By Mae Winkler Goodman

HERE the mourning Heliades
Wringing long white hands,
Turned to stately poplar trees,
Weep above the sands.

Still they shed their amber tears
While their mother grieves.
Down the empty-bosomed years
I hear the wailing leaves.

Master Espey, Eleven

TALES OUT OF SCHOOL. By John J. Espey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1947. 204 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MARK GAYN

ONE autumn day in 1923, Master John J. Espey, eleven, left the compound of the Presbyterian Mission at South Gate in Shanghai and headed up-river, to get his education —and (the neighbors said) to start on his way to Manhood. His destination was the mountain resort of Kuling, high in the mountains above the Yangtse, in whose American boarding school he would spend the next three years.

It is these three years, remembered, or sometimes imagined, through the haze of lapsed time, which form the theme of John Espey's twenty urbane and charming little stories, assembled under the title of "Tales Out of School."

Now China's summer capital, Kuling was then a stronghold of "Old China-Hand" or "China Port" mentality—narrow, race-conscious, bound by rigid rules of behavior, and regarding the Chinese only as servants or as customers for oil, tobacco, or this or that brand of mission Christianity. Not surprisingly, therefore, Espey's stories produce a portrait of Kuling rather than of Master Espey.

"Tales Out of School" are tales of understatement. The author does not

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storm, or denounce, or even criticize. His vignettes are delicate and shadowy. Not even in the story of a Jewish boy who was hazed by his schoolmates on the basis of a rumor everyone knew was unfounded, is there a word of condemnation. But the tale, with its exquisite craftsmanship, is probably a more persuasive lesson in tolerance than any fire-eating sermon could ever be.

Equally subtle, and done almost as well, are the stories of Mme. Poliakov, the Russian-born French teacher, who had a worldly understanding of children's foibles, and whose own passion for dresses had produced a minor crisis; or of the cave-in, avoidable and yet inevitable, in which two boys tried to wash mud off the eyeballs of a dying coolie.

But Espey's stories are not intended as tales of horror, or distress, or social strain. Most of them are lightweight and light-hearted accounts of a boy's adventures in education and adjustment. There is *le scouting en Chine*—which is like scouting nowhere else in the world, with coolies to carry one's pack on hikes, and other coolies to erect a tent or gather firewood or cook. There is a kite-flying contest, in which Espey and a friend win out with a kite held stable by an improvised tail of three knotted handkerchiefs. There is the story of Espey's brief career as a journalist—a career ruined by the strong cynicism of a twelve-year-old. And there is the tale of Miss Blanchard's war on nakedness, her passion for exercise before breakfast, and the surprise ending of a "bath night."

Most of the "Tales Out of School" have appeared in *The New Yorker*. It is to Mr. Espey's credit that they wear equally well, if not better, on second reading. If you have a sick friend, the tales will speed the convalescence. But be sure to read the book yourself before sending it off. You are assured of an evening of quiet delight.

Mark Gayn has just returned from two years in China, Japan, and Korea as chief of The Chicago Sun's *Tokyo bureau. He is author of "American Agent."*

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 707)

T. SCUDDER:
CONCORD: AMERICAN TOWN

Americans visit Concord . . . to refresh their unconscious faith in the nation as set forth in the Minute Man, just as they visit the heroic, brooding Lincoln—Daniel Chester French's second great symbol—in the Memorial at Washington.

Fiction. *With the exception of columnist Robert Ruark's madcap parody of historical fiction, all of the reviews of this week's crop of novels deal essentially with the forces of good and evil. Jo Pagano's "The Condemned" and Nathan Rothman's "Virgie, Goodbye" treat of the sad victims of lust and murder. Mark Aldanov's "The Deluge" portrays the criminal stupidity of Russia's upper-class society at the time of the assassination of Alexander. The theme of "The Judge's Story," Charles Morgan's brilliant and powerful novel of the conflict between an upright man and a human devil, is timeless, as is Ann Petry's dramatic story of lechery under the New England elms. Sin, this week, is the protagonist, virtue the defendant.*

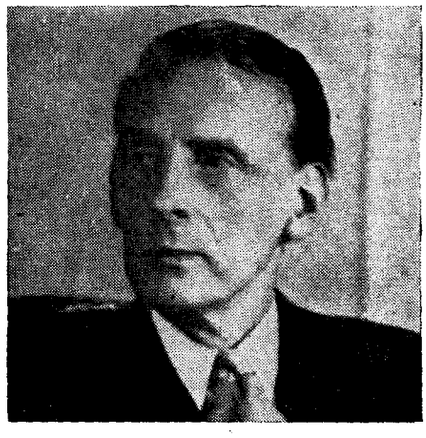
Satan Walking Up and Down

THE JUDGE'S STORY. By Charles Morgan. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 184 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

"AND THE Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?' And Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From walking up and down in the world, and to and fro in it. . . .'" George Severidge, wealthy and powerful, did not have a cloven foot, but he might well have had. Beneath the contemporary theme of a contest between two men for things intangible but more precious to the one than his millions, to the other than the comforts of his old age, runs the ancient parable: Severidge is the tempter who offers all the kingdoms of the world to those who will bow down and worship him. The symbolism is never labored nor obvious, the author does not preach, but the lesson is plain: that a man's integrity, the true purpose and meaning of his life, his essential individuality, is under constant assault, and is never in more danger than when the Devil is apparently kind and well meaning.

Severidge would have called himself kind, he would have described his insatiable curiosity as a benevolent interest, but his purpose was to destroy, to engulf, to take possession of anything that was dear to another. He was a collector, not only of material things, but of imponderables, and with weaker men than Judge Gaskony he had been successful. In drawing his modern parallel of the world against the spirit, Charles Morgan has done a masterly job of characterization. Severidge is both sinister and pathetic; his desire to dominate is the result of his recognition, in the stillness of his own heart, of his own weakness; and because Judge Gaskony represented to him those qualities of honor, purpose, and integrity which he himself lacked, he hated and envied him, and yet, paradoxically, he desperately desired the judge's friendship and respect. He became obsessed with determination to prove himself Gaskony's master, first by ruining him financially, so that he might offer him succor; secondly, by defeating the purpose which was most dear to the judge, the writing of his book, his life's work; thirdly, by striking at him through his ward, Vivien, the daughter of the woman whom the judge had loved and lost; Vivien, whose mind, if not whose body, Severidge almost succeeded in seducing.



In Charles Morgan's new book one comes upon "a polished and beautiful style . . . with precision, grace and true distinction."

The tension between the two men is admirably built up; Severidge's machinations are on the surface so kindly, the means which he uses to despoil and betray so superficially irreproachable. In the eyes of the members of Rodds, the club to which both men belong, the judge's financial ruin is the result of a debt of honor which he is bound to meet, though in reality Severidge has tricked and lied to him; Severidge's sponsorship of

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Vivien's husband's business career is ostensibly merely a rich and powerful man's friendly interest in and furtherance of a younger man's success, but through it he endangers Vivien's marriage and strikes at the very root of her faith and love. That Severidge is finally defeated is the moral victory of good over evil. The judge, stripped of his possessions, still retains his integrity; in the poor lodgings at Margate he finds that he has both time and freedom to finish his book, and when Severidge, in a final effort to conquer, offers him the means to return to his former way of life, the judge rejects it.

Charles Morgan has written a wise and profoundly moving book. The judge's story is not his alone, but in essence all men's, being the story of spiritual values and of the dignity and integrity of the individual. And in this day of so much "hard-boiled," hasty, careless writing, it is good to come upon a polished and beautiful style, ordered without being mannered, with precision and grace and true distinction.

Costume Piece

BEFORE THE DELUGE. By Mark Aldanov. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 561 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS FISCHER

THIS book covers the period from January 11, 1874 to March 1, 1881 in European and particularly in Russian history. Prince Otto von Bismarck, the Chancellor of Germany, Czar Alexander the Second and his family, Richard Wagner, Liszt, Karl Marx, Victor Hugo, Dostoievsky, Bakunin, the anarchist leader, Disraeli, and many other leading figures of the time walk through the pages and stop and talk. It is a costume piece. It is history based on meticulous research but served on the golden platter of fiction in a form that gives the novelist considerable freedom.

The central story is the assassination of Alexander the Second by Russian terrorists. Alexander was a rather decent czar as czars went. He was liberal and unconventional. He freed the serfs from feudal bondage and restrained Bismarck from launching another unnecessary war. He consorted openly with a princess while the Empress was alive and married his mistress soon after the Empress died. Court influences sought to dissuade him from modifying the Romanov autocracy but he leaned towards progress and finally signed a manifesto promising some democracy. That day he was killed by a Nihilist bomb.

All these events are narrated in authentic detail yet with a light touch. The only episode in the book which has excitement is an operation on a Russian official performed by a surgeon brought from Vienna for the purpose. The placid atmosphere of easy living and bored loving recreates the old Russia before the Revolution, before the deluge. The uppermost class in and around the Imperial family had no ties with the people and no interest in the country. Its vitamins were gossip, unearned income, mutual entertainment, and mutual detestation.

The history of the period is woven around the lives of several fictional characters, notably a dilettante named Nicholas Mamontov. He never works, he paints a bit, has some affairs, thrills at meeting Bakunin in Switzerland, wants to meet Karl Marx in London, interviews Dostoievsky, plays around at safe distances with some Russian revolutionists, writes for a newspaper, and then suddenly in fullblooded middle-age retires to his estate and marries a circus bareback rider who is practically illiterate and will be his slave. Czarist Russia was full of Mamontovs who knew that much was wrong with their world but were too lazy, prosperous, and relaxed to do anything.

The Mamontovs were as responsible for the victory of Russian extremism as the czars. The regicides—Aldanov presents exquisite portraits of Sophie Perovsky, Jeliabov, and other early heroes of Russian revolutionary evolution—rebel against the senseless autocratic regime. But these Nihilists were as divorced from the masses as the Romanovs and the Mamontovs. It was thirty-seven years before the triumph of Lenin and Trotsky. The millions had not yet started to stir.

Now and then, as I closed this novel to think about it, I wondered whether we, too, were not living before the deluge. Not that a Bolshevik revolution impends here or elsewhere. No Communist revolution has occurred since 1917. But our world may be moving towards an eclipse while those at the top are blind and those who see split hairs and sip drinks on Connecticut or Vermont estates. That gives the rootless Nihilists of our own time their undeserved opportunity.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

DICKENS CHARACTERS

Eleanor and Leonard Manheim, authors of a new critical study entitled "The Dickens Pattern," offer a quiz with a new type of scoring.

Item A on each question is for the causal Dickens reader; item B is for those who have once read most of the novels years ago; item C is for those who pride themselves on being "up" on Dickens; item D is for the dyed-in-the-wool Dickens fanatic. Count one point for each correct answer on A items, two points for B items, three for C, and four for D. Anyone should be able to get a score of ten; you know some Dickens if you can reach thirty; you're quite an expert if your score is fifty; and you're out of this world—and in the world of Dickens—if you can get over seventy. Answers are on page 35.

1. What Dickens hero worked for (a) an undertaker, (b) a theatrical troupe, (c) a proctor, (d) a retired dustman?
2. What Dickens character ran a school (a) in Yorkshire, (b) in Canterbury, (c) in Brighton, (d) in Cloisterham?
3. What Dickens character earned a living by (a) exhibiting waxworks, (b) being a locksmith, (c) running a horse-riding circus, (d) conducting a dressmaking establishment?
4. What Dickens character played (a) the flute, (b) the organ, (c) the clarionet, (d) the kit?
5. What Dickens character was forced to use (a) a crutch, (b) a claw for a hand, (c) one wooden leg, (d) two wooden legs?
6. What Dickens character died of (a) decapitation, (b) spontaneous combustion, (c) a fall into an abandoned pit, (d) chronic alcoholism?
7. What Dickens character was murdered by (a) a brutal burglar, (b) a French maid, (c) his partner in a fraudulent insurance company, (d) his steward?
8. What Dickens character married (a) a pretended sportsman, (b) a young doctor, (c) a writer of novels, (d) a barrister without clients?
9. What Dickens character who is referred to in the title of the novel in which he plays a part was born in (a) a workhouse, (b) a prison, (c) a fashionable London mansion, (d) a caul?
10. What Dickens character lived (a) in an overturned boat, (b) at Chesney Wold, (c) at the Maypole, (d) at the George and Vulture?

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Crime and Punishment

THE CONDEMNED. By Jo Pagano. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1947. 215 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

JO PAGANO in this book has a try at the ethical problem of crime and punishment. It is a good try, and that is no condescending phrase but an exact statement of quality. Men like Dostoievsky and Dreiser covered a great many more agonized pages than has Pagano, in their pursuit of the same problem: Who is guilty? Who is the murderer? Where does responsibility lie? And if they did better than he, one reason (among others) may be just that matter of space and extension. Pagano's job is good, intense, sincere; but it is also slick, speedy, tailored. It is thrown together with a lot of skill and whipped into shape right in front of our eyes.

Here is this fellow Wineberg, killed without reason by two crazy, hopped-up, small-time crooks. After a few gas-station hold-ups they have a try at kidnaping a rich young man for ransom. It looks good, until Jerry Slocum decides they have to kill Wineberg because it's safer that way. Jerry is an uncontrollable force; he whips himself into a fury until he hates his victim, and his accomplice too. This is Howard Tyler, who has been led all along the way, a kind of helpless victim of a sloppy childhood, of poverty and no luck and no skill, of the fascination of Jerry, who always knows what to do next. (But Jerry never knew why he did what he did, never knew about the tumor that pressed upon his brain. They found that later, in an autopsy.) Howard didn't want to kill Wineberg, and he couldn't live with the secret after it happened. He goes visibly out of his mind, and spills to the first girl he can get alone. They are caught, then. And, for an added fillip, they are lynched. Who is innocent? Who stands condemned?

Into these two hundred pages Pagano has packed a mass of violence, and a vital gallery of actors. They live, there is no doubting them. The strength of this tale is in its people, their wrenching gestures at living, their cries heard and unheard as they clamor over one another like animals in a pit. And the weakness is Mr. Pagano's passion to orate, the moments when he clambers in, too, and points the trembling finger, utters the prophetic judgments. There are too many pages, such as 171 to 173, when the thing seems frozen for effect, like a room of horror in a wax museum, with Mr. Pagano standing by, lecturing to a gum-chewing audience. There the book loses tone, and the philosophy becomes tawdry. Waiving the philosophy, then, which needed more space, more brooding, more real humble seriousness—the book is a powerful job and will reward reading.

Glandular Imbalance

COUNTRY PLACE. By Ann Petry. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1947. 266 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by BRADFORD SMITH

THE READER who chooses this book from its title, expecting a charming country piece, is in for a disappointment. For Ann Petry's second novel (her first was "The Street," written on a Houghton Mifflin literary fellowship) is a tale of lust, avarice, and disillusionment in the kind of New England town where "nothing ever happens."

Johnny Roane, coming home to Lennox (Connecticut) after four years at war, finds his wife Glory cold and unresponsive. Still technically faithful, Glory soon runs to another man's arms. Meanwhile her mother, married again, has been carrying on in similar fashion with—believe it or not—the same man. Mother, however, adds to lechery the sin of avarice; she tries to kill her second husband's mother in order to become mistress of the household.

This should be enough of the story to illustrate the fact that here is no tale for those who have fallen in love with country life. The book seems to say (though not for the first time) that humanity is as degraded in Lennox as in Studs Lonigan's Chicago. The trouble is that, while the reader is made to understand the social forces which produced Studs Lonigan, there is no comparable explanation for Mrs. Petry's characters. Her "good" people—Johnny, his mother, the druggist who tells the story—are shadowy, while her "bad" people lack motivation or background. They come to focus through a certain deftness of description—as in the case of the Weasel whose mean tongue and prying eye are responsible for much harm—but the basis of their actions appears to be purely glandular. So when old Mrs. Gramby (incorrectly spelled by the blurb writer) nearly dies because her daughter-in-law has fed her chocolates and hidden the insulin, you feel as if the incident were symbolic of the whole sorry tale: Glory, Ed Barrell, Lil need some unnamed drug to purge them of driving and purposeless lust as Mrs. Gramby controls the sugar in her blood.

—Illustrations by Joseph Stefanelli from "The Condemned."

Characters thus seen at the mercy of their glands cannot develop or change; maybe that is why their passions seem so listless and why Mrs. Petry felt the need of a hurricane to whip things up. Maybe it is why even the fight between Johnny and his wife's lover, with Glory hovering nearly naked in the background, has a dreamy quality. For a reader cannot feel emotionally engaged in characters for whom no basis of sympathy has been provided. And what is fiction without emotional engagement?

(*Continued on page* 21)

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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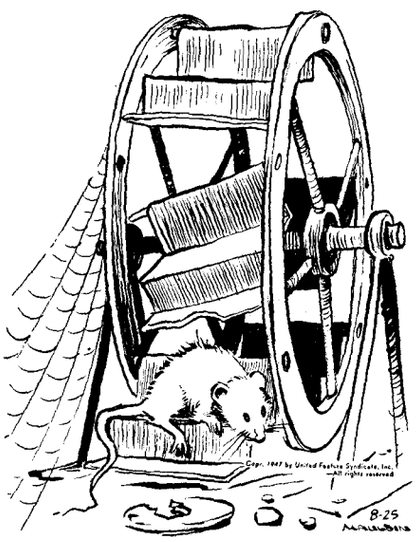
Of Men and Mice



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THIS drawing by Bill Mauldin appeared on August 25 in the newspapers carrying his cartoon-plus-text syndicated feature. There was no undercaption; but in a story accompanying the drawing, Mauldin wrote that he saw the mice exhibited at a "Mickey Mouse Circus" sideshow of a State Fair carnival. The circus consisted of a "collection of vermin-ridden, undernourished mice whose original color had been white, before they had been dipped in dye which turned their matted hair into startling shades of pink, purple, and green. . . . The battered pen which enclosed the 'circus' reeked of mouse sewage, and the only indication that anybody had bothered to take care of the animals in weeks was a litter of broken cheese crackers around the floor."

Reader response was quick and dramatic. Letters cascaded onto the artist's drawing board. People demanded that the carnival owners be drastically punished. There was a uniform sense of outrage that such cruelty toward helpless animals could be openly practised without the law stepping in. Many readers requested that their letters be forwarded to the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which would best know how to cope with such gross neglect.

Bill Mauldin read these letters and was encouraged and grateful for them. But he was also a little puzzled. This was the first time he had received any such effective response on any of his drawings. For months he had been dealing with indignities suffered by human beings. He had tried to call attention through his cartoons to the grotesque sufferings of the displaced and the damned throughout the world. He did his best as a satirical artist to point up the interstellar gap between the largesse in America and a hunger vacuum in Europe and Asia.

But there was little response. There were, of course, some letters from readers who accused Mauldin of propagandizing in favor of bringing the refugees to America at a time when the country was already overrun with furriners. But no letters offering unlimited help, no letters protesting against degradation and indignities when the victims happened to be human beings.

This dazzling incongruity is by no means unique. Many persons who would contribute with alacrity to a fund to salt over icy pavements to keep horses from slipping would promptly freeze over themselves if asked to chip in to supply food and clothing to needy families a few thousand miles away. Many persons who would risk their lives to rescue a cat from a skyscraper ledge wouldn't put themselves out to the extent of walking two blocks to mail a postcard to a Congressman asking that this country take the *immediate* and *adequate* measures that could keep millions of lives from toppling in Europe this fall. Too many large problems, apparently, are too large to be meaningful.

But if Mauldin is puzzled, try to imagine what goes on in the mind of one of the actual victims when he tries to comprehend why it is that so little has been sent so far compared to the need; why Americans are enjoying more meat per family than ever before in their history, the ratio being eight tons of grain to fatten up animals for table meat to one ton of grain shipped abroad; why the reports two years ago urging America to act at that time to block mass starvation were so little understood, and so largely ignored; why the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency was disbanded only a few months ago as having completed its job; why there has been so much bungling and maneuvering. Try to imagine, too, what goes on in his mind when he is told that there are traditional niceties of political strategy in America that make it awkward for the President of the United States to ask Congressmen to return to Washington before recesses are over so that they can consider appropriate aid.

Still taxing the imagination, try to visualize how you would explain to a scrawny, sickly youngster somewhere in Britain or France or Czechoslovakia or Austria or dozens of other places why it is considered perfectly all right to dump millions of tons of potatoes into the ocean when a single potato could be a feast. Try to explain to him, if you can, that this is done because it is sound economics since it helps to keep prices up, and then explain to him why everyone in Washington seems so mystified about the critical problem of bringing prices down.

Try to explain to this youngster how it is that the President of the United States now says that the war will not be fully won until there is a decisive victory over starvation abroad, but why it is that the President of the United States seems unwilling to risk political losses by asking the American people to fight the starvation war with the same measures over food and prices that were necessary to win the shooting war—there being no difference in his mind between the critical nature of the shooting war and the starvation war.

Try to explain why we knew only yesterday in the shooting war that victory depended upon a full mobilization of the nation's resources under law, rather than under "voluntary" measures; but why we think today that in an equal crisis we have only to pledge ourselves to forego meat on Tuesdays and chicken on Thursdays, although it is all right to have meat on Thursdays and chicken on Tuesdays, especially for those people who do not favor both meat and chicken at a single sitting.

Try to explain, finally, why America has not risen up in a vast and dramatic outpouring of mercy, opening up its hearts and its homes with a sense of dedication that at least proves we have not fatally segregated ourselves from greatness. For if we can explain this, we have also explained why a full and expanding stomach can exist in the same body with a thin and contracting conscience.

N. C.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"A Treasury of American Folkways"

SIR: I wish to express my surprise and regret that you should publish the so-called review of Frances Toor's "A Treasury of Mexican Folkways" [*SRL* July 5] signed by Betty Kirk. The first two paragraphs are devoted to Miss Kirk's own impressions of the celebration of the Day of the Dead at Janitzio and she goes on to say, "many times thereafter I asked of all who might know about the significance of the strange pagan ceremony yet I could never discover more than fragmentary reports." The hows of pagan ceremonies are easier to discover than the whys as Miss Kirk obviously found out. She does not review the book at all but dismisses it in her third paragraph with "Miss Toor tells only what can be found in the average guide book." This is not only manifestly unfair but untrue as well.

As a bookseller here in Mexico I wish to say that Miss Toor's book has been received here with enthusiasm and appreciation by Mexicans and foreigners alike. It has had splendid reviews. I join with Miguel Covarrubias in saying, "Miss Toor has successfully tackled the seemingly impossible task of reuniting the multiform aspects of Mexican lore in one volume."

MARJORIE SAWYER.

Mexico, D. F.

SIR: In her "review" of Frances Toor's "A Treasury of Mexican Folkways," Betty Kirk states that "the book is at its best in the section on Songs and Dance Music, prepared in collaboration with Concha Michel. And complete disappointment with the book is avoided by the ten superb color plates and 100 drawings by the distinguished artist Carlos Merica, and the inclusion of 170 photographs."

No credit is given Miss Toor for assembling and coordinating a great mass of unruly material, nor for the patient labor and sure growth that have resulted in her being able to call upon such distinguished collaborators as Michel and Merida.

Throughout her career Miss Toor has shown ability and integrity that have made her word on Mexico weighty and authentic. "A Treasury of Mexican Folkways" is her *chef d'oeuvre* and, as such, deserves a better consideration in your pages than Miss Kirk has given it.

Miss Kirk's chief complaint seems to be that the book in question did not clear up the whys of something she saw ten years ago on the island of Janitzio. Ten years is a long time to wait, burning with curiosity, for the chance publication of a book that might explain the mystery. Miss Toor's method has always been different: she has always gone directly to the source, found out for herself.

In her reference to Covarrubias's fine book, "Mexico South," Miss Kirk fails to make it clear that in a book equally as long as Miss Toor's, Señor Covarrubias has dealt with only one part of Mexico, Tehuntepec. And it might be of interest to her to know that Covarrubias wrote a sensitive and appreciative review of Miss Toor's book for a Dallas paper, wherein he pays her the supreme tribute of putting her at the top of the list of those writers who understand and can explain Mexico.

The writer of this letter is a serious student of Mexico, with an intimate knowledge of the country, a knowledge not confined to easily accessible places like Janitzio and Mexico City. He feels that in all fairness to "A Treasury of Mexican Folkways" and its author, some attempt should be made to deny the charge brought against both by Miss Kirk in such statements as "amateur's technique," and that "Miss Toor tells only what can be found in the average guide book."

RICKAY AUST.

San Diego, Calif.

SIR: I have been having an ecstatic time with Frances Toor's "A Treasury of Mexican Folkways." Still savoring in my mind the wealth and interest of its information, can you imagine my resentment when I learned that your critic found that "Miss Toor tells only what can be found in the average guide book."

Having in my library for rereading and reference every issue of Frances Toor's *Mexican Folkways*, a gem of a magazine now highly prized by collectors here and in the United States, I must take violent exception to Miss Kirk's reference of "this amateur's technique." Twenty-five years of studying a subject with enthusiastic and scholarly concentration certainly lifts Miss Toor from the "amateur" status.

J. F. MACDONALD.

Taxco, Mexico

SIR: I prefer to answer the critics of my review of Frances Toor's "A Treasury of Mexican Folkways" by referring them to a source which I believe we will all agree is objective. It is one to which I had recourse before writing the review which questioned the merits of Miss Toor's book, for one does not lightly challenge the authority of an expert in any field.

The definition of folklore, as given in Webster's International Dictionary, 1922 edition, is:

> Traditional customs, beliefs, tales, or sayings, especially those of a superstitious or legendary nature, preserved unreflectively among a people: hence, *the comparative science which investigates the life and spirit of a people, or of peoples, as revealed in such customs or tales.* (Italics mine).

The essence of my review was that Miss Toor's material conformed to the first half of this definition, but that her treatment of the material did not meet the requirements of the second half. Specifically, I wrote:

> Her method is not that of the folklorist who illuminates through scholarly understanding the origins and developments of a folk pattern. It is that of an observer, who has perhaps seen more of Mexican native life than any living person, but who has been content to record it, without explanation or interpretation.

It was because of her failure to investigate scientifically the meaning of her material that I used the phrase "amateur's technique." It was because she was content merely to report the facts that I compared the results to those of a guide book. While conceding that my phraseology is perhaps severe, it was prompted by the acute disappointment in an author from whom her friends and admirers expect so much. And it remains my conviction that Miss Toor has the equipment to convert this source book

"It's remarkable the number of things he can find to do before he starts work on a novel."

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into the invaluable study that it yet can be.

Since comparison with Miguel Covarrubias's "Mexico South," a companion book in the field, has already been invoked, a citation of their differences best clarifies my point. While Covarrubias devotes an entire chapter to the philosophical concept of "Death and the Unknown," with accompanying examples, Miss Toor disposes of the native philosophy of death in one paragraph before beginning an eight-page reportage of death ceremonies. As another instance of failure to reveal the full content of her rich material, in the eighty-eight pages comprising Part I on Work and Worship, she reduces "Notions of Work and Time" to five paragraphs; and the whole philosophy of *mañana*, which is basic to any understanding of Mexican culture, is covered in a paragraph.

During the twenty-five years that Miss Toor has lived in Mexico she has been a keen and sympathetic observer of the Mexican revolution and the cultural renaissance deriving therefrom. The accepted belief of most students of Mexico is that that revolution, begun in 1910 and now in its thirty-seventh year, is still on the march. From past conversations with Miss Toor, and with her intimate friends, who presumably are in agreement with her, it is my distinct impression that she too subscribes to this interpretation. Yet throughout her book she uses the phrase, "The social revolution of 1910-20." It is this careless terminology which to me characterizes her failure to treat her own material and her knowledge of it, with the proper respect. Should she choose to do this in a future volume, the present "Treasury" could swiftly be converted from the *hors d'oeuvre* which I believe it to be, into the *chef d'oeuvre* that Mr. Austin now calls it.

As for the undue stress upon the Janitzio incident, of which my critics accuse me, my assignment was to cover, in 600 words, two books totaling 672 pages. Such condensation obviously required interpretation, rather than reporting, and the single incident was selected and treated fully to illustrate the impression conveyed by the whole book.

Nor should Miss Toor's able defenders become too indignant with one adverse review, as I'm sure she is not. Authors, like politicians, must submit their work to public scrutiny and it is on the majority report that they stand or fall, while the reviewer, if his comments are to have any value must maintain the same intellectual honesty as that with which he credits both author and reader, letting the personality chips fall where they may.

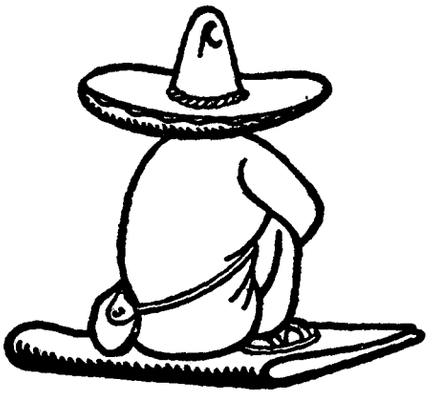
BETTY KIRK.

Norristown, Pa.

Footnote on Abimelech

SIR: In his article on Max Beerbohm [*SRL* June 21] Louis Kronenberger comes nearer the truth than I expect he knows, when he describes Max's Abimelech V. Oover, in "Zuleika Dobson," as "a burlesque of a burlesque—or rather a parody of a parody."

For this is precisely what Abimelech was. The Rhodes scholar on whom Max based his parody was later a doctor in New York Ctiy, and I knew him well. He was the most unflinchingly honest man I have ever



known; he lived without compromise, and he died out of disgust at the human race.

Steve in 1906 found in Oxford a heaven on earth. He was an outstanding athlete, and broke the record for the hammer-throw against Cambridge in 1907; but he was not without social and intellectual brilliance, and fell naturally into the group of Max Beerbohm's friends: but Max expected an American to be odd and uncouth, and it was Steve's particular pleasure deliberately to provide the parody of American youth that Max expected. The name "Abimelech" was a small case in point; Steve was a bit sheepish about his first name Albert, and when challenged came out with "Abimelech—all my family's names are out of the Bible." He chose the name because of his liking for the story of Abimelech's death.

Many stories have been told of Steve's wit, which probably matched Beerbohm's. There was a bishop in Oxford at the time who made it a practice when introducing freshmen to his white-haired wife, to say, "I always say my wife's hair makes her look older than she is. What do you think?" This floored most of the unhappy young men, but Steve came right back with, "A tactless husband whitens the hair of the youngest woman."

After Oxford Steve taught at Hotchkiss for a few years; then he took his M.D. and practised in New York City. In World War I he served in the U.S. Navy, and was a prisoner of war in Germany.

He was a good doctor and more. He had that sturdiness of character that made him guide, philosopher, and friend to his patients. Bluff, confident, humorous, and humane, he was a doctor, and a man, whom you could trust. But like other men of high principles, unable to compromise himself, he could not tolerate compromise in others; he could not suffer knaves gladly.

Certain political developments in the world at large, combined with practices he could not stomach in the medical profession, made him decide to quit. In 1934 he gave up his medical license, and virtually retired from the world to live on an island in the Pacific. He made no fuss about cutting himself off from his medical practice, from the world he had known, and from his friends. He came to a decision that he had had enough of it, studied some maps, picked out his island, and went.

Steve had his own views about the sanctity of human life, and considered that a man's life belonged to himself to do with as he wished. If a patient was incurably ill, Steve's idea was that the doctor should leave him the means of escape. Not administer it, but leave it. That is, he could leave some pills and say to the patient, "So many will relieve pain . . . the whole lot is a fatal dose," and leave it to the patient to decide. He used to say that he would have no hesitation in taking his own life, and that being a doctor he would know how best to do it.

The New York Times reported that Steve "died suddenly" on August 6, 1945. Students of history will recall that as the date of another event—at Hiroshima. Steve never wasted any time when it came to expressing his opinion.

RONALD MANSBRIDGE.

New York, N. Y.

More Guilty Bystanders

SIR: The attached [see box below] may be of interest as having a bearing on your editorials of Aug. 2 and 31. While the circumstances are not strictly parallel with those in the case of Mr. Cooper, it seems to me the bystanders are just as guilty. I feel we all owe you a debt of gratitude for giving this matter the strength of your pen. May we all profit by it.

AMELIA L. SCHLEICHER.

Collegeville, Pa.

CROWD WATCHES ATTACK ON CRIPPLE

Trapped on a subway stairway by a berserk stranger at 15th and Market Sts., a 55-year-old man with one leg was cruelly beaten yesterday while a curious crowd of several hundred watched.

None of the spectators moved in response to the victim's screams for help and he fought alone with his cane until police arrived. The victim was Arthur E. Sharp, 55, of 3242 N. Sydenham St.

At 7:30 A. M. yesterday, he was walking laboriously down the stairs to a 69th St. train, gripping the railing with his right hand and holding his cane, his lunch, and newspaper in his left hand.

Suddenly, he later told police, he was attacked from behind and repeatedly slugged on the head. Terrified of a fall, Sharp could not let go of the railing and could only stumble down the stairs, shrieking "help."

At the bottom, he turned to face his assailant, a 54-year-old man, later pronounced psychotic, and demanded: "What's the matter with you?" The response was a blow in the face that split both of Sharp's lips and knocked him down, injuring his hip.

Sharp fought back with his cane, thrice cutting the attacker on the head, but none of the rapidly growing crowd moved to help him.

—*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 5, 1947.

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(*Continued from page* 17)

A design somewhat too apparent, a rather too skilful contriving, adds to the quality of artificiality. Mrs. Petry then asks us to believe that a village druggist has written the story —a device not only unnecessary but unconvincing, since he could not possibly have seen the events or heard the words he records.

Still, "Country Place" is an interesting book because it reveals, as better books might have concealed, a fault not Mrs. Petry's but of our time. It is the fallacy that literature must reduce itself to the common denominator of glands and hormones at a time when the reverse effect of mind upon body has become pretty clear. It is, in larger terms, the lack of faith in a moral universe. Once you accept an automatic theory of conduct, men's actions become more violent as they lose purpose. Hence the violence in Mrs. Petry's story. It is the lack of moral logic that turns drama into melodrama.

Not that violence has no place in literature. But in Greek drama, in Shakespeare, the characters are responsible for their actions; they generate events and events have their consequences upon them. Then, out of materials very like those of "Country Place," you get a "Madame Bovary."

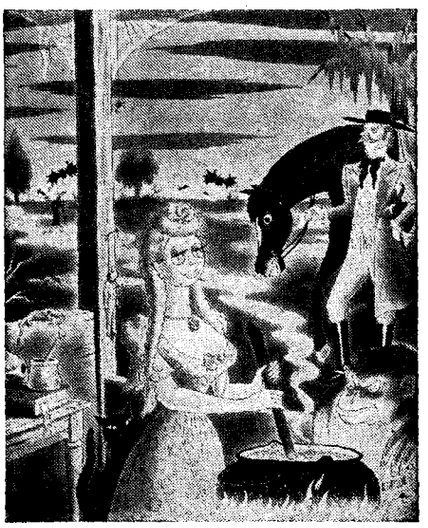
Best-Seller Lampoon

GRENADINE ETCHING: HER LIFE AND LOVES. By Robert C. Ruark. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 270 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by LEE ROGOW

"THIS is the godamnedest repast ever set before man or beast," says the author of this book about a banquet tendered his leading lady on the occasion of her coming of age. With some reservations, the same comment holds for the book. It is a hodgepodge, a melange, an olio, a mishmosh, a charivari — supply any other synonyms for hash you have handy.

"Grenadine Etching" was begat by Robert C. Ruark, the puckish young columnist, New Deal-heckler, and general-baiter who animates the left-hand side of the split page of the *New York World-Telegram*. "Grenadine" is a burlesque on the historical novel of the Scarlett O'Amber persuasion. It holds up a Coney Island funhouse mirror to about a dozen of the thousand-pagers in which a series



—Jacket Drawing by R. Taylor for "Grenadine Etching."

The Fetching Miss Etching.

of ladies with beautiful boopers proved that history was made at night.

Grenadine, the author's prototype of the best-selling courtesan, is not only well-drawn, but quartered. She spends her life zipping briskly through the stock situations that keep the circulating libraries circulating. Born under a curse (Mr. Ruark likes to talk dirty), she fulfils the hex by inflicting cigarette radio advertising upon a helpless civilization. In between, she gives the author an opportunity to take potshots at all the history-with-sex books; also Thomas Wolfe, Ernest Hemingway, Frederic Wakeman, psychoanalysis, the corruption of municipal governments, and anything else which happens to wander within range of his scatter gun.

Is the book any good?

Well, it's the kind of book about which you'd say to an inquiring friend, "It has a lot of funny stuff in it." Plots, sub-plots, switches, notions, and tricks pour out of the author's typewriter like clowns and midgets out of the miraculous red sedan in the circus. Some of the book is like the clowns. Some of it, especially the middle, is like the midgets.

"Grenadine Etching's" best pages would be crispy and crunchy to any bookworm's palate. I recall with particular pleasure the instruction of little Grenadine into the mysteries of voodoo, a section like an animated Charles Addams cartoon; the brief going-over Ruark gives Ernesto Hemingway; the passages in which the author, effectively abandoning parody, reprints verbatim, in all their naked horror, the commercials spoken on the radio in behalf of leading brands of cigarettes.

When Ruark is good, he's very, very good. But when he's bad—well, literary parody is hard to do and harder to sustain. A quick riffle of the mental card index produces only these writers who have brought it off with any amount of success: Max Beerbohm (see the "Second Woollcott Reader." His travesties are pretty musty now); Corey Ford (especially the Riddell book); Samuel Hoffenstein (including a memorable job on Edna Millay); and the giants, S. J. Perelman and Robert Benchley. That about completes the list. I believe it to be significant that the best of the lampooners preferred to serve it up in small doses. The joke of this-is-just-like-the-original-only-wilder very quickly runs into the law of diminishing returns. Especially when the reader isn't too familiar with the original.

In sum, you can score one demerit against Mr. Ruark for not making enough fun apart from the parody, one demerit against the parody technique for not being able to be sustained for novel length, and one demerit against the historical novel for intruding its own essential dulness into even a burlesque of the form.

When you've scored all the demerits, you might then go out and buy Mr. Ruark's book. Since he presumably read all the historical novels in preparation for the work, he unquestionably deserves every penny he gets.

Lee Rogow has been turning out gag and serious advertising copy for Blackstone Company for about seven years, has written juvenile operettas, can and does compose light verse practically extemporaneously.

Ersatz Love

VIRGIE, GOODBYE. By Nathan Rothman. New York: Crown Publishers. 1947. 248 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

THE PUBLISHERS of the present novel call its heroine a prostitute. "Call girl," I understand, is the up-to-date term for a young woman who receives (or visits) her "friends" by appointment only. Though that is exactly what Virgie Collins does in Mr. Rothman's story, he does not use the term. Yet it is the telephone—its ever-expected, nearly constant ring, its call—which, together with the crooning radio, produces in this book that atmosphere of prosperous business, matter-of-fact talk, canned passion, and hectic companionship which seems to characterize the habitat of the "call girl." What kills Virgie Collins is her sudden loneliness—the

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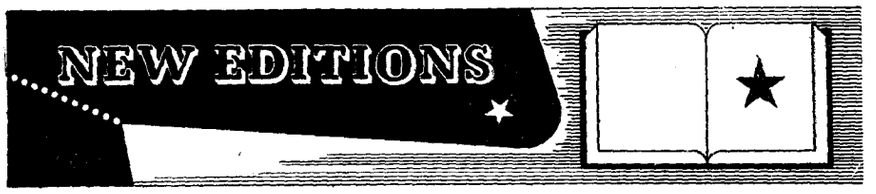
stoppage of the commotion about her, the quiet, her futile calls.

To my mind, Mr. Rothman's fine story is as much the tragedy of the inability of a telephone-and-radio-trained generation to stand loneliness as it is the drama of a pretty and not very bright small-town girl drifting into promiscuity and prostitution. That part of Virgie's short life-story—the tyrannical father, the lecherous elderly seducer, the lighthearted girl friend, and so on—does not account for the undeniable distinction of Mr. Rothman's small book. It gains that distinction when the police catch up with its heroine, and the only man she feels an attachment to—a perfect heel—gives her the sack. Only then does the brutality of her ordinary associations, the degradation of her existence penetrate the consciousness of the girl; as long as she herself is allowed to love—no matter how crude the nature of that love may be—the *ersatz* love whose object she is fails to touch her core. In that turn of Mr. Rothman's story there is a touch of Charles-Louis Philippe's "Bubu de Montparnasse," that unequaled mid-nineteenth-century classic novel of the prostitute-pimp.

The structure this author has given to his tale is both original and effective. It starts with one of Virgie's customers—a decent fellow who has really grown fond of her—calling the girl over the telephone, and learning of her suicide. The little tragedy of that man accompanies the greater drama of Virgie—a series of flash-backs—with forward-moving interpolations. Mr. Rothman is, so we are told, an ardent student of James Joyce. He uses the stream-of-consciousness technique throughout his novel. It is remarkable how well the clipped, hard-boiled, wisecracking parlance of New York's sidewalks and night spots lends itself to that method. A chapter on the department store Christmas of New York City, done in that style, is a brilliant *tour de force*.

In short, here is an engrossing, often very moving, and always very readable first novel. It is an addition to the long, long line of stories about venal love. Of the "glamor and misery" of Balzac's "courtesanes" little glamor is left to their present-day American sisters. Amorous *tête-à-têtes* are ordered over the phone, and "friends" learn of the death of a "call girl" in a drugstore booth.

Robert Pick, Austrian-born writer who has lived in this country for many years, is the author of the novel "The Terhoven File." His second work of fiction is now nearing completion.



AS READERS of this department know, E. M. Forster is coming back into print in the United States. A new edition of his shrewd and stimulating "Aspects of the Novel" was recently followed by a comprehensive volume of his tales of fantasy and escape; and now we have "Abinger Harvest" (Harcourt, Brace, $3.50), a collection of some "eighty articles, essays, reviews, poems, etc.," which takes its title from a Surrey village with which Mr. Forster and his family have long been connected.

A few of the items in this lot are so frail that the effort to make them survive seems unwise, if not an attempt at the impossible. *Vide* the examples of light verse and "Mrs. Grundy at the Parkers'." But the best of the boiling is very good fare indeed. Mr. Forster's mind is original and explorative; his way with his public frank and disarming. As an essayist he is the direct opposite of Joseph Conrad, of whom he writes: "Neither explicitly nor implicitly does Mr. Conrad demand friendship: he desires no good wishes from his readers: the anonymous intimacy, so dear to most, is only an annoyance and a hindrance to him." Mr. Forster always holds out a friendly hand, and we take it gladly. But the thoughtful reader can never be unaware that it is the hand of an arist, that the pleasant, easy voice to which he is listening is under masterly control, with the resources of our language at its command. Again and again, Mr. Forster exhibits his skill in choosing the precise word, the exact combination of words, necessary to give perfect form to his thought. When he declares that Jane Austen's letters are as a whole characterized by "triviality, varied by touches of ill breeding and of sententiousness," he packs a chapter's worth of criticism into a capsule. When he describes a typical Proustian sentence, he does so with an imagery as just and illuminating as it is humorous and memorable.

That Mr. Forster should write well of fellow writers, of the East, of historical figures, and such subjects as the English character, will surprise no one. But it may surprise some that he was as profoundly concerned as he was, between the wars, with mankind's unhappy predicament and probable destiny; that he saw so clearly the dark road down which we were stumbling. This is a Forster unfamiliar to most American readers, and one worthy of respect. Many of his words are still serviceable, such as those he spoke in 1935: "I am worried by thoughts of a war oftener than by thoughts of my own death, yet the line to be adopted over both these nuisances is the same. One must behave as if one is immortal, and as if civilization is eternal. Both statements are false—I shall not survive, no more will the great globe itself—both of them must be assumed to be true if we are to go on eating and working and traveling, and keep open a few breathing holes for the human spirit."

Two Booth Tarkington novels, "The Gentlemen from Indiana" and "Alice Adams," have been reprinted by Grosset & Dunlap ($1 each). More than twenty years lay between the original dates of these books, and during that time Tarkington climbed from the level of a facile storyteller to a considerably higher plane (for "Alice Adams" is effective and affecting), but one still below the altitude at which enduring work is done. . . . Voltaire's one indisputable masterpiece, "Candide," is now in the Living Library (World Publishing Co., $1), pleasingly illustrated by Samuel M. Adler, with a brief introduction by Carl Van Doren. The translation is the anonymous one used by the Modern Library. . . . "An Introduction to Modern Architecture" (Pelican, 25¢), by J. M. Richards and Elizabeth B. Mock, is an informative, well-illustrated little volume, concerned with the work of the pioneer moderns and such later men as Frank Lloyd Wright, Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Miss van der Rohe. . . . Did you know that two-thirds of your physical substance is plain water, that tides are supposed to be slowing down the speed of the earth's rotation, that you can make water boil without heating it? If you would garner useful and decorative facts of this kind, take a look at "Everybody's Encyclopedia of Popular Science" (Grosset & Dunlap, $2.49). BEN RAY REDMAN.

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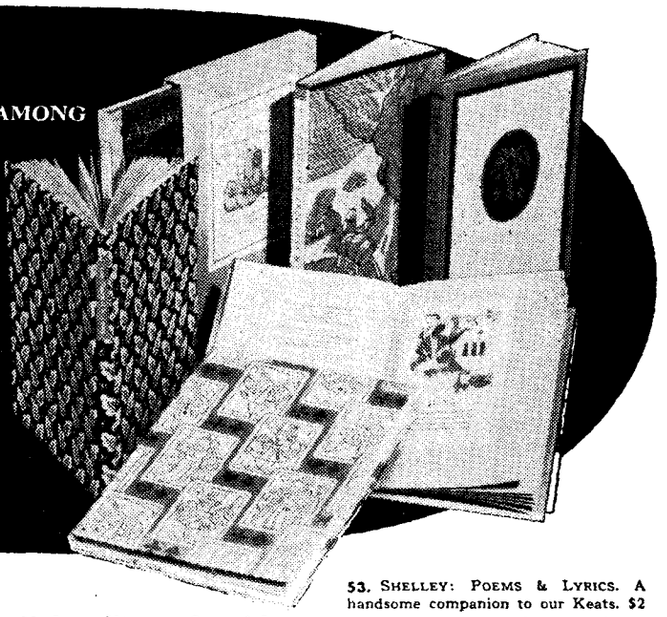

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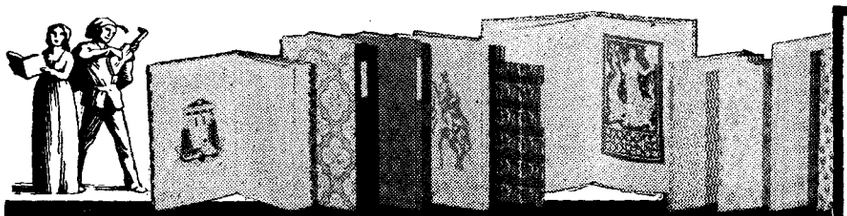

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Seeing Things

THE UPHILL ROAD

"OUR LAN' "* is a Negro drama unusual in its setting and promising in its theme. Its concern is a group of Freedmen who, at the Civil War's end, are deprived by a supposedly friendly Federal Government of the farmlands on an island off Georgia that General Sherman had given them.

Downtown Theodore Ward's play must have been better than it was uptown. Those who saw it on Grand Street insist it was simpler, hence more moving, there. They say that its story, touching in its essence, came across the footlights directly, aided rather than hurt by the lack of professionalism in its telling. This is often the case. Although there were manifest faults, they appeared to be unimportant. They were forgiven because of that charity of mind which cushions most experimental try-outs. No doubt, a kindly inner voice made itself heard, whispering to spectators (as it does on such occasions), "Oh, surely they'll fix this, and certainly they'll change that, when it reaches Broadway."

But uptown these very fixings proved disastrous. With the best of good intentions Eddie Dowling had overproduced "Our Lan'." A singer could not have been more drowned out by a noisy orchestra than Mr. Ward's script was by an over-elaborate production. Muriel Smith, the vivid Carmen of "Carmen Jones," and William Veasey, a gaunt Lincolnesque Negro possessed of enormous dignity, sang and acted with fine effectiveness the parts they had created down at the old Neighborhood Playhouse. Moreover, a huge cast, including Julie Haydon as one of the few white characters, played with what critics in their most meaningless moments are fond of describing as "sincerity."

Even so, whatever drama there was stayed stubbornly on the far side of the footlights. It was contained in the theme rather than ignited by its handling. It got lost in a setting by Ralph Alswang in which the good earth never ceased to be painted canvas and the nearby ocean seemed miles away. It was deadened, too, by fancy groupings, and most especially by Mr. Dowling's dependence upon spirituals. He relied upon these whenever he was in doubt or thought Mr. Ward was. He used them at the conclusion of nearly every scene until the beauty of the singing was forgotten because of the monotony of the device. So employed, they began to emphasize instead of cover the defects in Mr. Ward's dramaturgy.

"I am writing a play to keep myself from thinking," Sir James Barrie once wrote a friend. Long before the final curtain fell on "Our Lan' " uptown, it looked as if Mr. Ward must have written his play for the same reason. What he had deeply felt, he had failed to think dramatically. His example of racial persecution, poignant as an instance, had no fire as a play. His dialogue was commonplace; his structure nonexistent; his sub-plot an irrelevance. That insistent logic, that driving sense of selection, that instinct for essentials, that talent for clean, cumulative action—all these challenging fundamentals of the playwright's craft, which have been mastered by dramatists who have nothing to say, were absent from Mr. Ward's script, though he had much on his mind. The result was that what should have been anguishing in "Our Lan' " was only tedious.

So damning a judgment about so well-meant an effort, the theme of which has everyone's sympathy, is no pleasure to write. I write as I do out of respect for Mr. Ward and his materials. Yes, and out of respect for the Negro.

"It is the current predilection, indeed fashion, in white cultural circles to view with an alarming beneficence almost everything, however scanty, that the Negro attempts in the arts," observes George Jean Nathan in his new annual. "The Theatre Book of the Year, 1946-1947."

Mr. Nathan is not alone in having spotted this tendency. Intelligent Negroes are also aware of it—and resent it. No wonder. It is the final insult to their people. As an impulse it may be decent; as an attitude it is insufferable. Its kindness hurts. It proves that praise can be as wounding as censure. It discloses

—*Louis Melançon.*

The cast of "Our Lan' " plays "with what critics in their most meaningless moments are fond of describing as 'sincerity'."

friends functioning unintentionally as foes; champions as enemies. Its condescension, though unconscious, is an emphatic denial of equality. Without meaning to be so, it is a manifestation of Jim Crowism if for no other reason than that it segregates standards.

Quite rightly, therefore, as a Negro author having a proper pride in his people, Walter White took exception to such "beneficence" in a powerful article published in this very magazine only last week. Mr. White stated his disagreement with an irony which was a tribute to his self-control. He confessed he was *amused* "at the fact that, because it is considered remarkable that a Negro can write a book at all, a passing fair volume by one of my brothers is frequently hailed as a masterpiece." Mr. White's rightful contention was what is often forgotten. "Everyone with the slightest sense," he added, "is aware that genius has no color line." Neither, for that matter, has criticism.

HEAVEN knows, in a theatre which owes as much to the Negro as ours does, the willingness to salute the mediocre as if it were distinguished should long ago have been outgrown. At least it should have been discarded critically. If I limit this growth to critical appreciation, it is because, though the Negro as an artist has made genuine progress in our theatre, his position in it as a human being remains almost as difficult and degrading as it ever was on both sides of the footlights.

In the nation's capital, for example, and not too far from the Lincoln Memorial, Negroes even now are not allowed to enter the playhouse calling

**OUR LAN', a new play by Theodore Ward. Staged by Eddie Dowling. Associate director, Edward R. Mitchell. Settings by Ralph Alswang. Choral arrangements and direction by Joshua Lee. Presented by Mr. Dowling and Louis J. Singer. With a cast including Muriel Smith, William Veasey, Julie Haydon, Valerie Black, etc. At the Royale.*

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itself the National. Only recently it has been announced that Memphis this season will not see Mary Martin in "Annie Get Your Gun." Why? Because the local censor has objected to having a white woman sing a song in close proximity with three Negroes.

I mention these recent injustices because, inevitably, the sufferings, past and present, endured by the Negroes as a race have furnished their serious dramatists with their major materials. Heartbreaking as these materials are, they present special difficulties theatrically.

They fall into a pattern of oppression and protest, of lynchings and terror, of evictions and mob rule. And this pattern, so tragic for the individual, so anguishing for the race, so humiliating to us as a democratic people, by its familiarity presents the Negro playwright with challenges and limitations white dramatists do not face. The fault for this is the white man's, not the Negro's. Negroes have no other choice than to write from experience. The subject-matter of their drama cannot be expected to change until blacks and whites enjoy identical liberties. We indict ourselves when we attack Negro dramatists for the sameness of their themes.

The most impressive record yet to appear of the Negroes' triumphs and trials on our stage is Edith J. R. Isaacs's "The Negro in the American Theatre."* The wonder is that in this day of spiraling costs such a book could be published for three dollars and a half. It abounds in beautiful illustrations, beautifully reproduced. These run from James Hewlett's Richard III in 1821 with the African Company in New York right down to the Grand Street production of Mr. Ward's "Our Lan'." But, fine as the pictures are, the spirit of the text accompanying them is no less fine.

This is scarcely surprising. No one in America has made a more devoted contribution to the stage than Mrs. Isaacs. Her love for the theatre is more than an affection. It is a passion; a passion which for twenty-five years found its outlet in her editing of *Theatre Arts*. Mrs. Isaacs is not stagestruck in the ordinary, starry-eyed sense. She is an idealist whose beliefs in the theatre's potentialities have somehow managed never to become smudged.

A wise man once defined the theatre as a "time of life." No doubt it is that, and only that, from the point of view of the joys of first surrender to its glamour. Yet most of those who

*THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE. By Edith J. R. Isaacs. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc. 1947 143 pp. $3.50.

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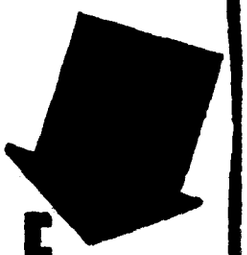

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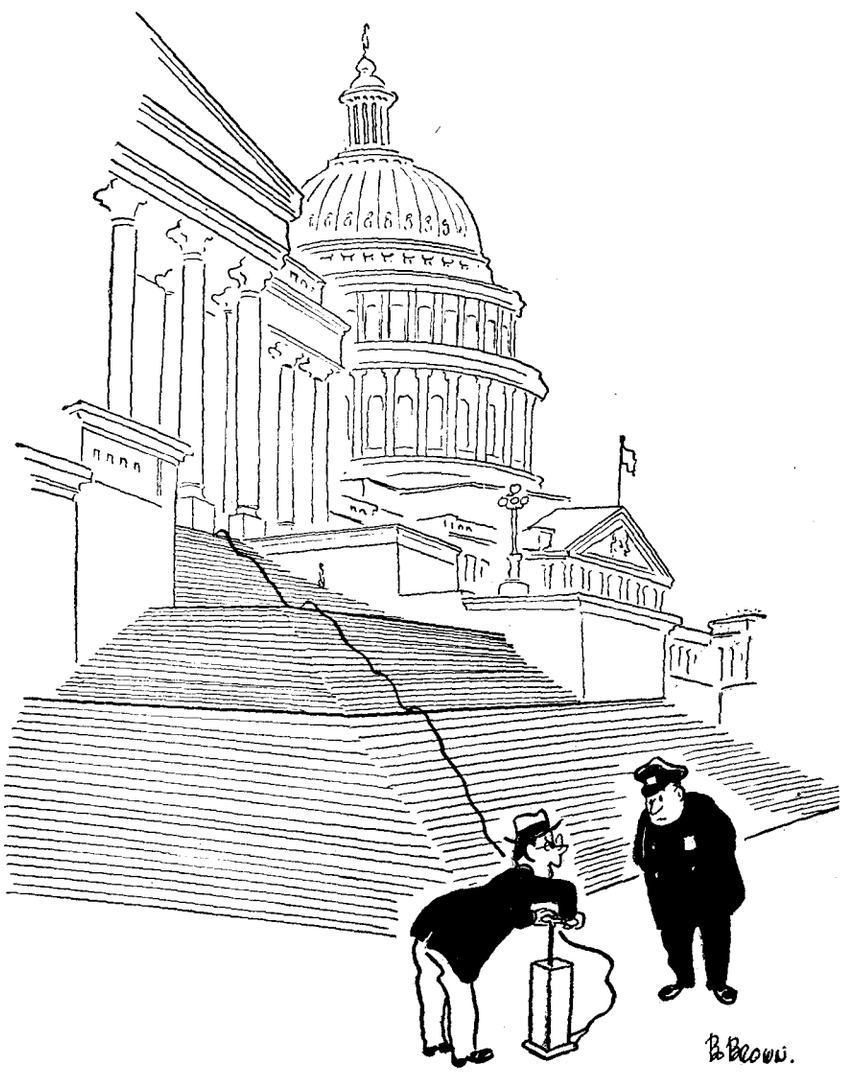
feel they have outgrown the stage are apt to be people who in their youth responded to its excitements without thinking of its dignity. It is Mrs. Isaacs's belief in this dignity (more accurately, her dedication to it) that has kept her love for the theatre young. Hers is a hospitable heart, a generous mind, and a truly liberal spirit.

There never has been anything parochial about her approach. She has wisely refused to see Broadway as the end-all and be-all. Her interest is not merely in what is; it includes what has been and what ought to be. Mrs. Isaacs has always thought of the stage in international terms. She is as concerned with what she was the first to describe as the "tributary theatre" in America's colleges and smaller cities as she is with the dance, the opera, the ballet, scenic and costume design, dramatic literature, the film, or the professional stage in every land.

It is from such an informed and all-inclusive point of view that she writes of the Negro and our stage. Although at times Mrs. Isaacs may become the victim of her own enthusiasm, she can never be accused of condescension. If she errs critically by being too generous in her praise of all samples of Negro playwriting and production, she does so only because humanly she recognizes the gallantry that is a vital part of her subject. After all, the story she has to tell is as much a fight against cruel odds as it is the account of a people's contribution to an art.

On his return to America after having scored a great success in England, Bert Williams is reported to have said, "It is no disgrace to be a Negro but it is very inconvenient." Naturally, the humiliations Bert Williams was amiable enough to describe as inconveniences figure in Mrs. Isaacs's chronicle. They are an essential part of the saga she is writing.

Her narrative moves forward swiftly. From Ira Aldridge, who a century ago was acclaimed throughout Europe as Othello, even as Paul Robeson was



"I'm wiring my Congressman."

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in England in 1930, to such productions as "Deep Are the Roots," "Jeb," "Strange Fruit," and "Finian's Rainbow," she pictures the slow, hard fight for recognition.

The old minstrel-show years of Brother Bones and "Gentlemen, be seated" are sketched in vividly. And the years before the arrival of the Blues "like a great musical Mississippi, only running north." Described with equal affection and understanding are the first seasons at the Lafayette in Harlem. And that all-important day in 1917 when Ridgely Torrence's "Three Plays For a Negro Theatre" were staged at the old Garden. A turning point is reached with Charles Gilpin's unforgettable performance in "The Emperor Jones."

Then follow appropriate appreciations of performers, well known and well loved. Of Florence Mills, Bill Robinson, Paul Robeson, Rose McClendon, Jules Bledsoe, Richard B. Harrison, Ethel Waters, Frank Wilson, Muriel Smith. Of outstanding productions, too. Of "Shuffle Along," "The Blackbirds," "In Abraham's Bosom," "Porgy," "The Green Pastures," "They Shall Not Die," "Stevedore," "Four Saints in Three Acts," "Porgy and Bess," "Show Boat," the Harlem "Macbeth," "Mamba's Daughters," "Cabin in the Sky," "Native Son," Paul Robeson's "Othello," "Carmen Jones," and "Anna Lucasta."

These and many more, they are all there, summoning to mind some of the best evenings our stage has had to offer. It is a courageous history and a moving one. Mrs. Isaacs is not blind to the difficulties which now exist or which lie ahead. But she writes with a satisfaction everyone must share of the progress that has been made. Without the achievements of such Americans as these Negroes, the American theatre would not only have been infinitely poorer. It would have been decidedly less American. JOHN MASON BROWN.

Letter Writing

By Harriet Gray Blackell

THE FLAVOR of letters is different
As honey and lemons and butter,
As pomegranates differ from mangoes
Are phrases that scriveners utter.

As rosemary, rue and sweet basil
Inundate night, gently steeping
The hollows and hillsides with fragrance
While most of the world is sleeping,

So subtly does each letter-writer,
Without ever thinking a minute
Season the lines of a missive
And seal his own flavor within it.

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CASH AND CARRY

DOWN in the Old Dominion, the countryside is spotted with the birth marks of the nation, steeped in the struggle for freedom, spaced like a history book with signposts bearing names like Jamestown, Yorktown, Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, Madison, Mount Vernon, Monticello, and Appomattox. The lore of this land carries many an American back to Virginia to the tune of a tourist income which last year ran to $116,000,000.

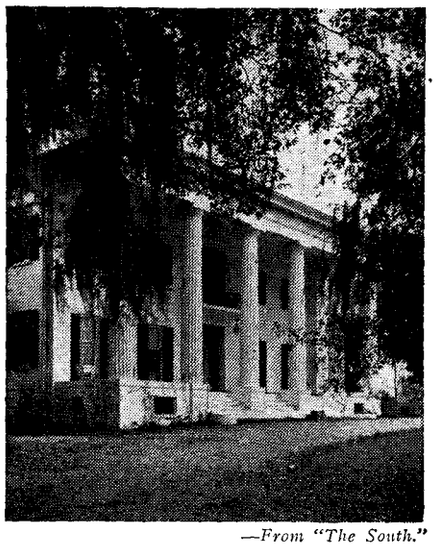
There are a number of routes to history in Virginia's cash-and-carry system. The pedestrian trail, of course, is the road southward to Richmond, then via Route 1 to Raleigh, or southeast to Norfolk, Newport News, and Virginia Beach. Midway on the southeast spur is the refurbished village of Williamsburg, a must on anybody's itinerary. The town was named for King William III and sports some 265 Colonial buildings which were either restored or rebuilt. In a fit of backward progress nearly 600 modern structures had to be torn down to make room for the brick and plaster replica of the old days.

The College of William and Mary, established in 1693, is still going strong in Williamsburg, its architecture fitting smack-dab into the décor of the day. Nearby is an old inn where some intellectuals among William and Mary students are said to have founded Phi Beta Kappa in 1776, about the same time our soldiers and statesmen were preoccupied founding a republic. Williamsburg is also a stop on the autumn Virginia tours of the American Express Co., which features a steamer ride from Baltimore down Chesapeake Bay. The planned tour includes a stop at Virginia Beach which registers a mean October average of sixty-three degrees. The days are still warm and sunny, the beach clubs are open, there is bicycling on the three-mile boardwalk, and in any season you can get an excellent seafood dinner for which the shore is famous.

An alternate route through the South which will reach its height of autumnal beauty in a few weeks is the Blue Ridge Parkway connecting the Shenandoah and the Great Smoky National Parks. Its 500-mile, still uncompleted tract strings along the ridge line of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and over 100,000,000 Americans live within two days' drive of its lazy southwesterly route. Its best season stretches between April 15 and Oct. 15, but the road is open the year around. No flower picking, no hunting, no commercial vehicles, no billboards. Right and left along its general right of way is the magnificent University of Virginia campus at Charlottesville; the Elkton Caverns, Grand Caverns, Caverns of Melrose, Shenandoah Caverns, the Masanutten Caverns, Luray Caverns, and appropriately the Endless Caverns. Staunton, heart of the apple country, which even now is heavy with fruit, is also the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson, and seat of the military academy. Source of a myriad of bumper signs that hang on cars from Maine to New Mexico is the Natural Bridge on Route 11 near Lexington. It is precisely what the name implies, measures 215 feet high, was once called "God's greatest miracle in stone" by John Marshall, was bought by Thomas Jefferson from King George III for twenty shillings, and is now illuminated at night like a Bowery bum.

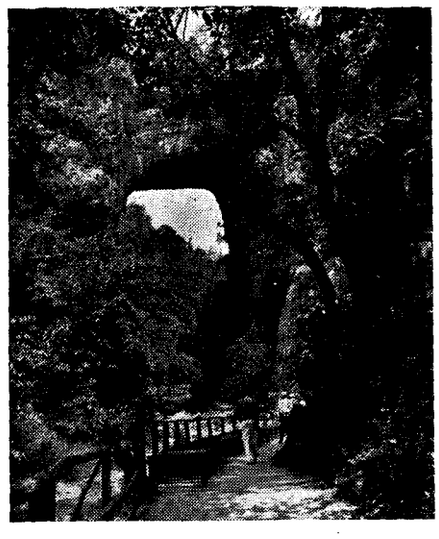
Southward lies Roanoke, smoked Virginia hams, Southern fried chicken, Asheville, and the Smokies. Beyond is Pinehurst, Aiken, Sea Island, corn pone, greens, grits, magnolias, ante-bellum belles, and the old Southern whoop-de-doo, hospitality, that is.

HORACE SUTTON.



—*From "The South."*

"Pinehurst, Aiken, Sea Island, corn pone . . . greens . . . grits . . . ante-bellum belles . . ."



"God's greatest miracle" was bought from King George for 20 shillings, is now illuminated at night like a Bowery bum.

Beautiful, but . . .

THE SOUTH. By the editors of Look, *in collaboration with David Cohn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.* 1947. 393 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by CARL CARMER

IF THE only reason for this book were to print David Cohn's introductory essay, publication would be entirely justified. Mr. Cohn succeeds in being a loyal native son, an objective appraiser, and an urban, charming, and amusing writer all at the same time. The late Blondin's stroll on a wire strung above Niagara Falls seems casual in comparison. This essay should be read and weighed by every reader who sincerely desires to understand the South.

As for the volume itself, it is a handsome and not very useful picture guidebook. The photographs are well composed and clearly reproduced. The captions are factual, too brief for real comprehension of their subject matter, and monotonously dull. The editors of *Look* have taken too wide a field for this kind of coverage. Their shot-gun method makes no consistent pattern. When the reader has finished looking through the whole book he has no general overall impression. It may be argued that since this is a guide book, no more could be expected, but the fact is that the WPA guide books, by their detailed thoroughness and particularity, gave much more. It is to be hoped that the next publications of illustrated guide books will be reissues of the volumes of that remarkable series that are out of print. All the WPA guides to Southern states are available however, and the traveler is still advised to take them along when he sets out for Dixie.

Former University of Alabama English professor and New Orleans newspaperman, Carl Carmer is author of "Stars Fell on Alabama."

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Antique Pieces

BEHOLD WILLIAMSBURG. By Samuel Chamberlain. New York: Hastings House. 1947. 176 *pp.* $5.

THE WILDERNESS ROAD. By Robert L. Kincaid. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1947. 392 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by BEACH CONGER

THE HISTORIC and scenic attractions of Virginia have brought tourists to that state for many years. Long before colonial Williamsburg was constructed, visitors swarmed to such genuine pre-Revolutionary sites as Monticello, Charlottesville, Jamestown, and Richmond.

The twentieth-century version of a colonial capital is beautifully illustrated in "Behold Williamsburg." As the captions explain, most of the buildings were burnt to the ground 100 or more years ago, but they have been carefully rebuilt to give twentieth-century tourists an idea of what pre-Revolutionary cities looked like. There are photographs of all the important buildings from several angles, interior and exterior views, as well as drypoints and sketches. Whether or not you have been there, it is an excellent guide or souvenir for the historian, antiquarian, architect, or plain tourist.

As Mr. Chamberlain explains, the photographs were taken at intervals from March to November, to provide the best possible views, and he waited carefully until there were no parked cars. Generally, he also waited until there were no human beings, so that, with one or two exceptions, the cumulative effect is that of a ghost town in the Far Western silver or gold mining centers.

An entirely different book is "The Wilderness Road," which is an historical account of the events which led to the discovery of a trail into the Western areas, and of its subsequent lapse into disuse and designation of its various sections as U. S. 11, Virginia 421, U. S. 25, and Kentucky 150. There is not much in it which will attract the attention of travelers to Virginia, unless they be careful students of history who appreciate the value of a commemorative marker at the side of a highway rather than historic buildings and famous battle sites.

Mr. Kincaid tells of the struggles against the Indians, of the exploration, of the search even for a route to the fabulous East Indies which led to the establishment of the trail which first crossed the mountains from the Virginia tidewater regions into what then was considered the "West." The colonists wanted to expand their holdings, but the mountains contained them. Not until the Wilderness Trail was blazed, part of it by Daniel Boone, did settlers begin to move in large numbers across the Alleghanies, through the Cumberland Gap, into the lush fields of Kentucky. Eventually the Ohio River valley route condemned the Wilderness Road to obsolescence, but while it existed, it was an important factor in opening up the Western areas beyond the coastal settlements.

Mr. Kincaid spins a fascinating, albeit scholarly, yarn, with distracting footnotes, of the early and more recent history of this trail. The maps leave much to be desired for the ordinary reader who is not fully acquainted with the region. But for the reader who is avid for details of little-known facets of early American history, the book constitutes a well-written account of colonial life and the urge to expand.

Beach Conger, first foreign correspondent expelled from Germany by Hitler, is the former bureau chief and current travel editor of the New York Herald Tribune.

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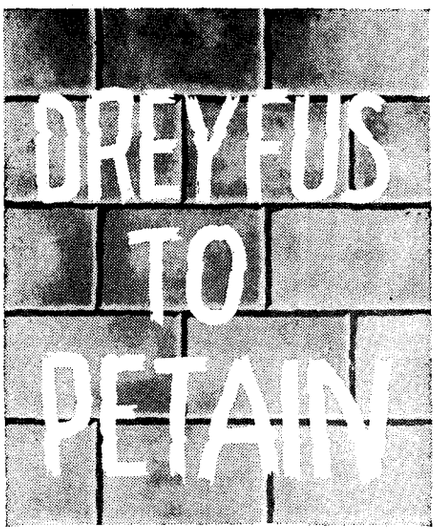

Although half a century has passed, the Dreyfus Affair still remains the most mysterious, the *fishiest* of all *causes celebres*. And here is the eternal plot: on one side the Big Brass, the ousted aristocracy and the subversive elements of the Church; on the other the intellectuals, the progressives and the people; in the middle, a defenseless dupe who conveniently happened to be Jewish.

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The War.

A book called "What Would Be the Character of a New War?" by eighteen top-ranking naval and military authorities was published in 1933. The majority of the experts went wide of the mark in their predictions. And now, once again, we are entering a period of memoirs and biographies like Colonel Allen's "Lucky Third" on Patton (don't miss Patton's own forthcoming autobiography "War As I Knew It") and predictions looking towards a new war. Captain Puleston believes that the modern navy, first advocated by Admiral Mahan in 1890 in his "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History," will not be superseded. He may be right—if there are enough people left to care about a navy after the first bombs fall.

"Brains and Guts"

LUCKY FORWARD. By Robert S. Allen. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1947. 424 pp. $5.

Reviewed by SAUL K. PADOVER

"LUCKY FORWARD" (the code name of the Third Army in the field) is the history of what is perhaps the greatest combat army this country has produced in modern times. The author, Colonel Robert S. Allen, former Washington-Merry-Go-Rounder, was a member of the Third Army staff and he writes both as a soldier and a journalist. For those who do not mind plowing through a maze of military symbols, abbreviations, indications, codes, listings, and numberings, this is a very good and exciting story indeed.

In essence, "Lucky Forward" is Patton's book. That General is its central character and revered hero. The chapter "Brains and Guts," a pen-portrait of Patton, is almost worth the price of the book. Though Allen is no stylist or psychologist, he gives a vivid, two-dimensional, sharply etched, blunt portrait of a fantastically colorful figure who loved war and was honestly and passionately dedicated to the profession of arms. Allen quotes him as saying: "There is only one thing I am interested in—war. I live it and I breathe it. I always have and I always will. That's the whole story of George S. Patton, Jr." He was superb at his job. Patton, according to Allen, had a keen sense of humor, a truculent nature, and an instinctively sound psychology. Loyal to his men, he demanded and got the last ounce out of them, and they revered him. He knew soldiering and military psychology. His fabulous showmanship and unprintable obscenities (Allen does print a few of the milder ones) were deliberately assumed, for Patton was otherwise a gentleman of education and wealth. He felt that a General should be seen by his troops in splendor and in frequency, and that he should talk the kind of language a combat soldier himself uses. For this reason Patton went to the front and showed himself as often as possible and ordered his staff officers to do the same.

—*Press Association.*

George S. Patton, Jr.: "There is only one thing I am interested in—war."

His down-to-earth talks were, indeed, the delight of the boys. He could sling the lingo with the best of them. In the Ardennes, once, he told a combat unit just before it was to jump off:

> Some of you probably think I am a son-of-a-bitch. Well, you are right. I am a son-of-a-bitch to the Germans. And you are sons-of-bitches to them and they're sons-of-bitches to you. Everyone is a son-of-a-bitch to someone. That doesn't mean a thing. What is important is what you do about it. You are about to attack a lot of dirty, low-down, Hun sons-of-bitches. The question is what you are going to do about it. There is only one thing to do about it. Be better sons-of-bitches than they are.

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The point is—they were, and they won spectacular battles.

He absolutely refused to accept anything but perfect discipline; he would not admit failure to obtain an objective ("Any commander who fails . . . and who is not dead or severely wounded, has not done his full duty"), or the existence of such human weaknesses as battle fatigue, or the recognition that in battle the enemy was human. "Once you admit that the enemy is not a son-of-a-bitch," he said, "there is no sense in trying to kill him."

Allen describes Patton's appearance in one vivid sentence:

> Six-foot-two and straight as a ramrod, he not only towered over everyone but glittered like a Christmas tree, with numerous stars, gleaming brass buttons, and high, polished boots.

The rest of the book is a detailed, swift-paced account of the Third Army's progress from Normandy to Czechoslovakia and is written in a style that combines journalese with militarese. Allen writes naturally as a violent Patton partisan who is afraid neither of using superlatives nor of stepping on tender reputations. He makes out a good case that the war would have been over in the autumn of 1944, after Patton's spectacular sweep across France, if malice or incompetence at SHAEF had not stalled the Third Army by depriving it of fuel and supplies. Historians will someday decide that issue; those of us who were there at the time do know that Patton's victorious army was halted utterly, in September 1944,

FRASER YOUNG'S
LITERARY CRYPT: No. 226

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 226 will be found in the next issue.

AUPYP NZ RBIREZ

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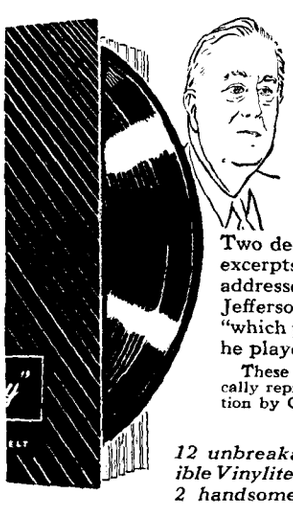

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not by the Germans but by a lack of gasoline. Allen has also some blunt things to say about the Battle of the Bulge, a disaster (which Patton later turned into last-minute victory) due entirely to Twelfth Army Group incompetence. Those of us who saw the G-2 reports at the time know how right Colonel Allen is on that score. The author still feels bitter about the troubles Patton was having with the brass at SHAEF, with Com Z, and with "topside" in general.

There is probably another side to the whole story and it is certain to be written sometime. But admirers of Patton and the veteran graduates of the great Third should love this book.

How to Win a War

THE INFLUENCE OF SEA POWER IN WORLD WAR II. By W. D. Puleston, (Capt. U.S.N. Ret.). New Haven: Yale University Press. 1947. 310 pp. $5.

Reviewed by HENRY SALOMON, JR.

IT HAS been succinctly stated that a second-rate Navy is like a second-rate poker hand; it is not worth a damn. For the United States, the essence of this remark is pertinent. Captain W. D. Puleston USN (Ret.) in his book, "The Influence of Sea Power in World War II," emphasizes this pertinence by presenting a lucid

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE VOICE OF THE CORPSE *Max Murray* (Farrar, Straus: $2.50)	Well-deserved bopping of English village poisonpenstress presents plenitude of suspects to harassed Scotland Yarder and amiable lawyer-amateur.	Good example of English-countryside school of mystery, reminiscent of countless predecessors, and handled with light touch to slightly breathless conclusion.	Well above average
DEATH WILL FIND ME *Helen Steers* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50)	Young wife reminisces on suspicious ten-year-old death of college classmate to husband and friend—who immediately start sleuthing.	Divertingly narrated by believable and likable husband-wife combination. Suspense surges rapidly to boiling point—and ends with fearsome psychopathic bang.	Admirable
SCENE IN THE ICE-BLUE EYES *Percy Winner* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.50)	American war-corres., working for both sides as spy, encounters girl-agent whose strangely mixed loyalties cause many casualties and endless trouble.	High adventure in wartime England, France, Portugal, etc., with more than dash of abnormal psychology. Espionage passages rather staggering.	Readable
WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU *Ethel Thornbury* (Bobbs-Merrill: $2.50)	Ex-Army flier, fresh from hospital, meets old friend in Washington, later stumbles on his corpse, and helps F.B.I. corral killers.	Another post-war Nazi intrigue yarn, with atom-bomb data as basis. Sundry colorful nuclei fizz satisfactorily and according to Hoyle.	Adequate thriller
THE CASE OF THE LAZY LOVER *Erle Stanley Gardner* (Morrow: $2.50)	Perry Mason, puzzled by receipt of unexplained $2,500 checks, finds they mean murder, hopelessly involved client, and pyrotechnical courtroom solution.	Minutiae of final elucidation call for reader's strictest attention. Story handled throughout with customary Gardner skill, pace, and wry humor.	High-grade
WICKED UNCLE *Patricia Wentworth* (Lippincott: $2.50)	Charade-slaying of British black-mailer and another fatality put numerous suspicious house-guests on spot. Miss Silver extricates them—all but one.	Uncrowned Queen of Scotland Yard, surrounded by deferential inspectors and such, deduces with customary percipience and aplomb, with knitting-needle obbligato.	Solid silver
BRUTAL QUESTION *Oliver Weld Bayer* (Crime Club: $2)	Washington radio mc., ex-O.S.S. man, asks questions about "suicide" of friend in Italy, precipitates more murders, and smashes fascist plot.	Pungent portrayal of Capital society adds much to brisk and eventful yarn with likable amateur sleuth and some engaging secondary characters.	Entertaining

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account of the late war from the point of view of strategies employed by "admirals, generals, and air marshals" to gain objectives handed them by their political leaders.

Captain Puleston's book might appear to some as a 300-page statement of the obvious. But what is obvious to those who subscribe to Mahan's thesis that the nation which controls the sea lanes of the world controls the world, is not so obvious to others who naïvely flaunt history or who refuse to acknowledge we are an insular power. Surrounded by the two largest bodies of water on the globe, the Western Hemisphere is set apart from the world's principal land mass and center of population, the European - Asiatic continents. The United States is also free of hostile neighbors, making it possible for us to have the same freedom of fear from invasion enjoyed for centuries by England and Japan. But such freedom presupposes the most discriminating use and appreciation of sea power.

In certain circles, it has long been fashionable to debunk naval power. Although this thesis did not enjoy much vogue during the war, it has gained many adherents since V-J day. Demands for economy, mixed with wishful thinking and improper interpretation of new weapons, have forced many a thoughtful citizen into the corner with those who would reduce the Navy to impotency. It is contended that the Navy is no longer our first line of defense. This is, of course, true if what is implied is that the Navy cannot prevent long-range air attacks. However, between equally prepared and strong countries, such attacks will not be the determining factor in the outcome of the ensuing war. But if we are to keep war away from our shores, if we are to carry it to another continent, then we must have unequivocal control of the world's sea lanes. Since these account for two-thirds of the globe's total area, this presupposes powerful fleets which the United States alone today has the resources to maintain.

> Unquestionably atomic bombs like submarines and aircraft, add to the difficulties of controlling the sea and using it in time of war [writes Captain Puleston]. And a nation without a Navy but with enough atomic bombs can make the use of the sea very dangerous and can deny adjacent waters to even the most powerful fleet. But certainly the nation with the most powerful fleet and its own supply of atomic bombs will have the advantage. . . . The United States, however, thanks to its geographical position, its power of production, and its proved capacity to fight on the sea, has the best opportunity of retaining and using sea power.

Captain Puleston hopes his "book may be regarded as a postscript to the volumes of Mahan." The book does bring Mahan up to date but it adds nothing new. Nonetheless, by reemphasizing the importance of sea power, Captain Puleston is rendering his country a service. When there is no longer a ship afloat and when all intercourse between nations is in the air, it will be time to reexamine Mahan. Until then Mahan and his disciple, Puleston, can be exonerated for urging their nation along a path of wisdom proved by the events of centuries and so recently validated again for those of us who are apt to forget.

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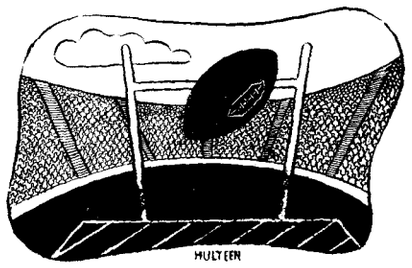
MAMMON'S BABY

(*Continued from page 8*)

ing with a money civilization, since it is the only kind of civilization I have ever lived in. But the first task of a writer in a money civilization is to make up his mind what money means to him. When the late President Roosevelt proposed a $25,000 ceiling on incomes, the outcry from the upper middle class suggested that the Chief Executive was prying open its intractable little mouth and removing therefrom the half-chewed breakfast. The reaction seemed disproportionate. Since time immemorial, people have been enjoying food, shelter, and a modicum of recreation for considerably less legal tender than is represented by $25,000 a year.

But in one sense the reaction to President Roosevelt's suggestion was not out of proportion. Money is employed in the United States for many other purposes than food and shelter. It is employed as a substitute for giving and receiving affection. It is used as a shield against problems that are felt to be too difficult to solve in non-monetary terms. It is used—widely used—to prop up damaged egos that were hurt too early and too deeply for the achievement of any real emotional self-sufficiency. You cannot increase the caloric content of an egg by eating it from an expensive egg-cup. But *something* is added by the expensive egg-cup, and if the writer is to function freely in



our time, he must know what the extra factor is.

One of the major questions which appears to confront the American writer, operating as a fallible human being in a money culture, is what he shall do about the fact that the big money comes from Hollywood and the book clubs, with their constricting mass audiences. But this is not the real question. The real question is: How much money does a writer need? Enough to convince a Standard Oil executive that authors are not sissies? I have mentioned before that readers, being only mortal, sometimes try to run away from their problems and sometimes try to grapple with them. If the writer sometimes tries to grapple with *his* problems, he will not get so far away from the reader that he will starve.

THE writer, then, must have some sort of idea or intimation of the conditioning influences in his society. He must be aware that those conditioning influences cannot help affecting him. Beyond that, and in addition, he must have some personal, emotional connection with the developmental and affirmative side of the culture. This is sometimes rather loosely defined as "social consciousness" by some writers and sometimes critics who wouldn't be caught dead with it. But social consciousness, by definition, *is* consciousness. If we look back over the great books of other times—Mr. Bromfield, to return to him for a moment, mentions Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens, Trollope, Goethe, and Schiller—we see that very few of them were written in a vacuum by chambered nautiluses. The writer whose relationship to the culture is that of a helpless, dependent child—accepting benefits, but unable to confer them—has very little chance of developing his innate potentialities to their fullest and richest extent.

It is not easy to be a writer, these days, but the account executives and grocery clerks are not having any saturnalia, either. As has frequently been pointed out, ours is a frontier society without a frontier. We are historically conditioned to value and admire aggression, but we no longer have all outdoors for it to spend itself in. When the land was gone, we tried for a while to make a substitute frontier out of money. But that horizon, too, is closing in. The New Deal was able to clip the wings of the well-heeled because, for all their automatic anguish, they had no definite and vital and dynamic idea of what they were going to do with their money, if the Government left it in their possession. Currently, of course, they have found out what they want to do with it. They want to keep it.

But while we have an historical tradition of aggression, once genuinely useful, we have no tradition of how to use it in an unforested world. Hence we have become very much afraid of aggression. And with reason. For in the absence of recognized and respected channels for it to flow through, it is forcing channels for itself. Some of our aggression we are turning against ourselves, as individuals. The increasing incidence of alcoholism, psychoses, neuroses, suicide, psychosomatic illness, and other self-destructive activities bears witness to this. Some of our aggression we are turning against ourselves, as groups. The tooth-baring of management and labor is only one of many striking cases in point.

A third channel which our historical aggression is cutting for itself lies in the direction of Russia. It is impossible to listen to a news broadcast or read a paper without hearing at enormous length about Russia, and yet in this veritable cataract of verbiage, all the Russians are ever reported as saying is, "Woof!" If they

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are being faithfully portrayed in our media of communication, the Soviets have certainly broken the world's record for unrelieved monotony.

Running away to Russia has become our favorite parlor game. Everybody knows, or claims to know, what the Russians want. The important question, however, is not what the Russians want, but what *we* want. And in answer to that we can only say helplessly that we do not know. All we know for certain is that we want to feel better. We are bowed almost to the knees with an increasingly heavy load of unformulated and unexpended aggression. If we get rid of it destructively abroad, by going to war, we will be throwing out the baby with the bath and getting rid of ourselves at the same time. The notion of using it constructively at home—along lines suggested, to take one example, by "Kingsblood Royal" and "Gentleman's Agreement"—has not yet made much headway with our imagination. Contrary to the popular notion, aggression, properly handled, can be a great creative and constructive force.

Our somewhat obsessive preoccupation with Russia is another earmark of the frontier mind. The frontiersman can understand only the enemy without. He has no concept of the enemy within the chest cavity. Here perhaps is the answer to Mr. Bromfield's query as to why American writers are not turning out great or near-great books. The great books of the past were not written by frontiersmen. The great writers of other times have not been concerned, in any profound sense, with robust external activities and extroverted behavior. Almost uniformly, they have dwelt upon the enemy within—the struggle between good and evil, between God and Mammon, between true gods and those that are false.

It is pointless to dwell upon the deficiencies of American writers unless their frame of reference is also taken into consideration. The society in which they live recognizes the sex drive and attempts to direct it into socially useful channels. But this society does not recognize its potentially valuable heritage of aggression and, not recognizing it, is unable to direct or manipulate it. However, if the frontiers of land and of money have disappeared, a new frontier has opened up—disclosed by the anthropological and psychological pioneering that began in the last century. The new frontier is human behavior, particularly our own.

The writer, of course, has always been concerned with human behavior. But now the people for whom he writes are more concerned about themselves than they used to be, and they have a less naïve and over-simplified idea of the well-springs of behavior. Some of our writers have already begun to explore this new frontier. Not, to be sure, with Periclean grace and shrewd Athenian insight, but well enough to command national attention and leave a few bent twigs for their successors.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. (a) Oliver Twist, (b) Nicholas Nickleby and Smike, (c) David Copperfield, (d) John Harmon, alias Rokesmith.

2. (a) Wackford Squeers, (b) Dr. Strong, (c) Dr. Blimber, (d) Miss Twinkleton in "Edwin Drood."

3. (a) Mrs. Jarley, (b) Gabriel Varden, (c) Mr. Sleary in "Hard Times," (d) Mme. Mantalini in "Nicholas Nickleby."

4. (a) Dick Swiveller in "Old Curiosity Shop," Mr. Mell in "David Copperfield," and Jack Redburn in "Master Humphrey's Clock" all played the flute—badly, (b) Tom Pinch in "Martin Chuzzlewit" and John Jasper in "Edwin Drood," (c) Frederick Dorritt played the clarionet (Dickens's spelling) in "Little Dorritt," (d) Prince Turveydrop in "Bleak House" played the kit, a three-stringed violin used by dancing masters.

5. (a) Tiny Tim, (b) Captain Cuttle, (c) Silas Wegg in "Our Mutual Friend," (d) Sim Tappertit in "Barnaby Rudge" lost the legs of which he was so proud during the Gordon riots.

6. (a) Sydney Carton, (b) Krook, the filthy junk dealer in "Bleak House," (c) Stephen Blackpool in "Hard Times," (d) the pantomime actor in Jem Hutley's tale in "Pickwick Papers."

7. (a) Nancy was murdered by Bill Sikes in "Oliver Twist," (b) Mr. Tulkinghorn in "Bleak House," (c) Tigg Montague was murdered by Jonas Chuzzlewit, (d) the elder Mr. Haredale was murdered by Barnaby Rudge, Sr.

8. (a) Arabella Allen married Mr. Winkle in "Pickwick Papers," (b) Esther Summerson married Allan Woodcourt in "Bleak House," (c) Dora Spenlow and Agnes Wickfield married David, in "David Copperfield," (d) Lizzie Hexam married Eugene Wrayburn in "Our Mutual Friend."

9. (a) Oliver Twist, (b) Amy Dorrit, (c) Paul Dombey, (d) David Copperfield.

10. (a) The Peggottys, Mrs. Gummidge, and Little Em'ly, (b) Sir Leicester Dedlock, Lady Dedlock, and Mrs. Rouncewell in "Bleak House," (c) John Willet and his son Joe in "Barnaby Rudge," (d) Mr. Pickwick.

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OCTOBER HARVEST

IT IS A slightly bewildering experience to come back from the green and gold glory of the Maine woods to the four walls of a room in Manhattan, and to find there literally hundreds of brown paper packages, all containing books and all equally hard to open. This reviewer found exquisite pleasure in Robert Lawson's description of the "Bities" package in his new book—"Mr. Twigg's Mistake." After struggling for hours with the heavy paper tape that seals packages nowadays it was soothing to read—"Then it was sealed in two layers of cellophane, making it dust and moisture proof and *practically impossible to open.*" Once they are exposed to the eye, however, the children's October harvest is well worth the effort. It is a lively, varied, colorful display that now covers desk, tables, shelves, and even the floor of this reviewer's domain. The most beautiful and, perhaps, the most important book so far is The Horn Book's "Illustrators of Children's Books." To open a package and find a book like this is a joy, to turn the pages is a pleasure that goes deeper than the critical faculty because it takes you far back into the pleasure of childhood, to read the text is a thrilling and deeply informing experience. The production of such a book in times like these restores our faith in the past, the present, and even the future.

In this number we are reviewing just a few of the many books that are piled around us. For the Book Week number on November 15 we hope to review and list many more.

MARY GOULD DAVIS.

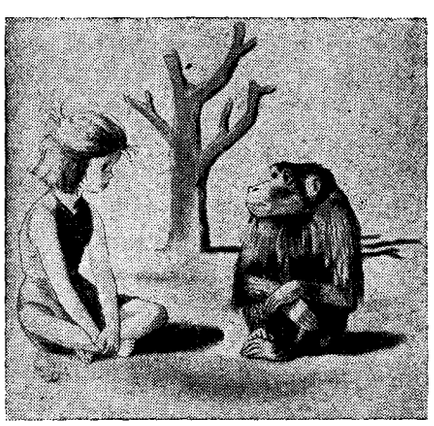
THE FIRST STORY. By Margaret Wise Brown. Pictures by Marc Simont. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. No paging. $1.75.

IN A rhythmic prose Margaret Wise Brown tells of the first days on earth when man and the animals were not known to one another. There is a little girl who, wandering through the new world, meets the different animals and identifies them. She realizes that she is different from them all. Then she meets a little boy. They talk together and find that they have in common qualities that the animals lack. "So the boy and girl came to know each other a long time ago. . . ." Marc Simont's drawings are unusual and very lovely. They are printed in black and white against a golden background. Their effect is to make one feel the strangeness and beauty of a world newly created. This is a beautiful book.

THE KING GIVES A PARTY. By Samuel C. Webster. Drawings by Betty Alden. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 110 pp. $2.

THIS is a fantasy in which Teddy, a modern boy, dreams that he goes to the palace of the king in the story of "Cinderella" just before the famous ball. He helps in the preparations for the ball, borrows proper clothes from the prince, meets Cinderella and warns her about the stroke of midnight from the royal clock. Then he helps the king arrange the royal wedding.

It is a burlesque, and an amusing and well-written one. But—do boys and girls, especially girls, want their favorite fairy story burlesqued? If the right translation of Perrault's "Cinderella" is given them at the right age, it becomes a part of their inner hopes and dreams. It is, in truth, a love story based upon the most glamorous theme that exists in all literature. Something of its glamor and its beauty is taken from it when the story is treated as it is here. We find ourselves wishing that Mr. Webster had given his humor and his invention to another less cherished theme.



—From "The First Story."

MOUNTAIN BOY. By Thelma Harrington Bell. With drawings by Corydon Bell. New York: The Viking Press. 1947. 40 pp. $2.

Randy lived in the mountains of North Carolina, so high in the mountains that he could not go to school. His mother tried to teach him to read and count, but Randy would not learn. Then his mother told him a story about a mule—and Randy found that it was easy to learn after all. Many drawings printed in sepia give a vivid sense of the Great Smokies.

THE STORY OF PAMELA. Text and pictures by Mabel Jones Woodbury. New York: The Viking Press. 1947. 91 pp. $1.50.

PAMELA, the lady monkey from Africa, tells her own story with an energy and a spice that are irresistible. She becomes a famous dancer in America, but she ends up in a zoo. It is not a sad ending, however. Pamela is sure to have a good time wherever she is. Amusing sketches of Pamela and her friends illustrate a very amusing story.

THIRTEEN DANISH TALES. Retold by Mary C. Hatch. Illustrated by Edgun. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1947. 169 pp. $2.50.

THESE engaging and humorous Danish folktales were translated by J. C. Bay a number of years ago. Miss Hatch has retold them in words that exactly fit their meaning and their atmosphere. They are the real "peasant" tales—homely, funny, sometimes a bit sly and cryptic. It is a gay-looking book with apt illustrations.

MISS KELLY. By Elizabeth Sanxay Holding. Illustrated by Margaret S. Johnson. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1947. 125 pp. $2.

MISS KELLY is a cat. She lives with a very nice family in a small town. Her life is happy and uneventful until a tiger escapes from a circus and threatens the safety of Miss Kelly's family. Then the real drama begins. Miss Kelly has a strange and wonderful gift. She has been taught by a devoted mother to speak the human language. She conceals her gift because she fears that it will frighten and antagonize her family. But the tiger forces Miss Kelly to speak. She makes a confidant of Mr. Clinton, the father of the family, in a very original and amusing scene. Thereafter Miss Kelly and Mr. Clinton work together and solve the problem happily. The story is well plotted and well written. It will probably appeal to children and to their elders

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in equal measure. Miss Johnson has made some very effective drawings of Miss Kelly and the tiger which are unusually well reproduced.

PARTNERS OF POWDER HOLE. By Robert Davis. Illustrated by Marshall Davis. New York: Holiday House. 1947. 167 *pp.* $2.

A SALTY tale of a buried treasure of ambergris that is found on lonely Monomoy Point on Cape Cod. Sam, the boy who finds it; Shack, the lobster man who lives on Monomoy; his grandfather, old Gramp Sears; Mr. Petty, who keeps the feed and grocery store; the men from the Coastguard, and the retired newspaperman, Mr. Cahoon, who has a taste for adventure—these are the characters. They are so well drawn that anyone who knows Cape Cod has probably met them. They have the honesty and independence, the courage and the dry wit that have characterized Cape Cod people both in real life and in literature. This is a good story, with plenty of excitement. It is illustrated with effective line drawings.

BORN TO FIGHT: THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL HALSEY. By Ralph B. Jordan. Philadelphia: David McKay. 1947. 208 *pp.* $2.

IT IS NATURAL for boys to admire military leaders, especially victorious leaders. Admiral William Halsey captured the imagination of many American boys and girls during the years that he led the United States fleet against the Japanese. This biography is written by a former war correspondent who served with Halsey's ships during much of the war. It might be expected, therefore, to fill a very real need. Unfortunately, the author has failed to write critically or in good proportion. The approach varies from the sentimental to the "hard-boiled." The language is often coarse and is sometimes vulgar. The general tone and attitude are wrong. Coming at a time when young people, as seldom before in our history, need a broad perspective, tolerance, and understanding, this attitude of suspicion and mistrust is unfortunate.

CORTEZ THE CONQUEROR. By Covelle Newcomb. Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky. New York: Random House. 1947. 109 *pp.* $3.

THE PUBLISHERS have selected an unusual format for this story of the conquest of Mexico. It is a large book, fourteen by ten and one-

LONGMANS JUNIOR BOOKS

THREE WITHOUT FEAR

By Robert C. Du Soe. An exciting, present day story of two boys and a girl who make their way Robinson Crusoe fashion along the coast of Lower California. Between the three there grows a strong friendship—each learns from the other on their primitive journey. Illustrated by Ralph Ray, Jr. Ages 10-14. $2.25

THE SPIRIT OF THE EAGLE

By Merritt Parmelee Allen. Captured by hostile Indians young Thorp Mason was finally released with the sign of the eagle tattooed on his chest. Crossing the trail of Capt. Bonneville and his mountain men, Thorp joined them in their hazardous adventures as they explored the Rockies. Decorations by Avery Johnson. Ages 12-16. $2.50

PRAIRIE COLT

By Stephen Holt. A grand, rousing tale of Leif and the two colts he trains for the Stockman's Race. Losing the more beautiful horse, he pins his hopes on the unpredictable Big Red. Big Red disappears but is recaptured in time to enter the thrilling Stockman's. Illustrated by Wesley Dennis. Ages 10-15. $2.25

ROSANNA

By Martha Gwinn Kiser. Lovely Rosanna stood at the crossroads. She felt she ought to do something important, but she preferred to cook and take care of her small brothers. Nathan and the wise Ralph Emerson suggest a happy solution to her problem. Illustrated by Anne-Marie Drutzu. Ages 12-16. $2.50

RACING THE RED SAIL

By Alice Geer Kelsey. Tells of the children of Greece today—of their courage and ingenuity and love of fun. Mitsos wins the Boy Scout hunt by finding the oldest clock in Athens. Manoli helps on an American ship and is given canvas for his father's windmill. Illustrated by Dorothy Bayley Morse. Ages 8-12. $2.00

DEEP WOOD

By Elleston Trevor. A delightful story of the small animals who lived in the forest and followed the pleasant ways of the ancient wood. With its wise humor and love of woodland things it is a story full of enchantment for all readers. Illustrated by Stephen J. Voorhies. Ages 8-12. $2.50

ON HAMPTON STREET

By Alice Williams. A warm and friendly picture of a Welsh family living in an American mining town. The five Edwards children were a lively and resourceful lot and they had great times when holidays, birthday, picnics, and Aunt Beth's wedding came along. Illustrated by Anne Vaughan. Ages 8-12. $2.25

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half inches, the type is large, and it is illustrated with many stunning drawings in strong black and white. These drawings are so arresting, so dramatic that the book is a treasure for art lovers. Miss Newcomb has not softened the violence of the story for younger readers. The scene of the destruction of Montezuma's lovely capital city is as terrible in its detailed description of man's capacity to destroy the beauty that man has built as some of the scenes in the Second World War. Throughout the story Cortez is pictured as a relentless, ambitious conqueror. One may feel admiration for him, but never sympathy with him. One wonders what the young people of today will think of this book. In design and illustration it will undoubtedly stand out among the books of the year, as they are exhibited for Book Week and the Christmas buying. One would like to see the drawings arranged in sequence on a wall where perspective would give them full value. On the printed page they are almost overpowering in their strength and realism.

GREAT MEN OF MEDICINE. By Ruth Fox. Illustrated by Dwight Logan. New York: Random House. 1947. 240 *pp.* $2.50.

MISS FOX has written of the life and work of nine great figures in the history of medicine. Here are essentially accurate and complete sketches of Vesalius, who made anatomy a science, of Paré, who made surgery an art, of Harvey and Jenner and Laennec—respectively, a pioneer in the study of the heart, the conqueror of smallpox, and the man who "heard a heart beating through a roll of paper, and thus the science of diagnosis came into being." Here also are Semmelweiss and Morton, Lister and Koch. The concluding chapter summarizes some of the progress made in medical science during the present century.

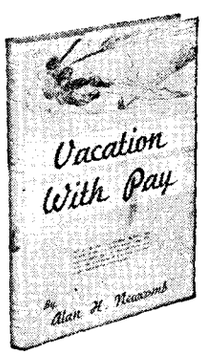
This book will help to fill three gaps in our literature for young people. We have never had enough books that give a series of biographical sketches. We have never had enough biographies of Europeans, and we have not paid enough attention to men of science. Without sacrificing enthusiasm and color, Miss Fox writes carefully and well. Her book should be as useful in public libraries as in school classrooms.

THE TALKING WIRE: THE STORY OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL. By O. J. Stevenson. Illustrated by Lawrence Dresser. New York: Julian Messner. 1947. 207 *pp.* $2.50.

ALEXANDER Graham Bell demonstrated as a boy in Scotland both mechanical inventiveness and an interest in the mechanism of speech. The family moved to Canada, and the boy grew to manhood in the New World. His early interests were to culminate, after long years of disappointment and uncertainty, in the invention of the telephone. This is a biography that will almost certainly interest young people. It will appeal at the same time to adults. As an excellent history of the development of the telephone—Mr. Bell himself acknowledged that it was "the product of many minds"—it deserves a place in both the public library and the school library, as well as in homes. It is a well balanced story of a man who was as distinguished for his strength of character and the richness of his personality as for his scientific accomplishment.

HAWAII'S QUEEN, LILIUOKALANI. By Adrienne Stone. Illustrated by Raymond Lufkin. New York: Julian Messner. 1947. 273 *pp.* $2.50.

QUEEN LILIUOKALANI was the last native ruler of Hawaii. Her nearly four score years spanned a period of infiltration and of economic exploitation by the white men and the eventual annexation of the islands by the United States. The author knows Hawaii at first hand. She has written this full-length biography with sympathy and understanding. Native Hawaiian life at the end of the last century was very different from the Hawaii that is known now by so many young Americans. Here they will find a fascinating and detailed picture of the old customs and conditions. If it seems a bit sentimental from an objective point of view it is sure to have an appeal—especially to girls. The illustrations and line drawings by Raymond Lufkin are very fine.



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COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
	Recording Technique	*Surface*	
BARTÓK, PIANO CONCERTO #3 (1945), Gyorgy Sandor; Phila. Orch. Ormandy. Columbia M 674 (3) $4.55	Modern, wide range recording, bit metallic. Piano rather percussive. Excellent balance.	A	Two similar works, from last period; like other recent music, far easier to understand, more melodious than earlier (1920's) music. These are full-fledged standard concertos; shld. be repertory works. Both fine performances; Menuhin-Dallas particularly good. Start here for Bartók exploring!
BARTÓK, VIOLIN CONCERTO (1941). Yehudi Menuhin; Dallas Symph. Antal Dorati. Victor M 1120 (5) $5.80	Not as big or broad as it might be, but musically effective. Violin is prominent; high highs lacking.	B+	
BARTÓK MEMORIAL ALBUM (SHORT EASY PIANO PIECES). Played by Bartók with own introductions. Vox 625 (2 *plastic*) $5.80	Made for Hungarian broadcast, not for pressing; yet an excellent piano job. Helped by good surfaces.	A	A wonderul children's album (adults too). These are some of countless ultra-simple, beautiful pf. settings of little folk songs, etc. B's own voice. Piano teachers' note!
BARTÓK, STRING QUARTET #4 (1928). Guilet String Quartet. Concert Hall A8 (3 *plastic*) *(Subscription only)*	A remarkable string quartet recording, big, powerful. Makes music surprisingly easy to listen to.	AA	Two works from the harsher 20s. The quartet, tho dissonant, is a delight, with profoundly beautiful playing. Shades of last Beethoven quartets! The sonata isn't so easy; partly its earlier, starker idiom, partly more difficult medium. R. Dances are straightforwardly exotic.
BARTÓK, VIOLIN SONATA #2 (1922); FOUR ROUMANIAN DANCES. Tossy Spivakovsky, Artur Balsam. Concert Hall AA (3 *pl.*) *(League of Composers)*	R. Dances splendidly recorded; sonata has a narrower resonance. Both clear, easy to follow.	AA to A	

BARTÓK—A NOTE FOR LISTENERS

STRANGELY enough it is when a contemporary composer begins to sound conservative to us that we are well on the way to understanding his music.

However radical a good composer may seem, he must also be a conservative. The best of our "modern" composers are traditionalists in the sense that Beethoven was, men who turn the elemental uses of music into sharp, new channels, based on the old and proved principles.

Thus the longer one listens to Bartók the more timeless, the more conservative does he sound, in spite of the superficial smoke screen of harsh dissonance, the exotic Eastern touch. Bartók was traditional in a more immediate sense, too. The forms and expression he used were often those of the nineteenth century. The violin and piano concertos (*above*), dissonance aside, are concertos in the fully accepted nineteenth-century sense. Bartók uses folk music not in a "folksy" way, but in the manner of a Brahms, to build his own "art" expression. Bartók's movements tend to follow familiar patterns, an imposing and complex first movement often in sonata form, a grave slow movement, a scherzo, a brilliant rondo-like finale. Bartók uses themes as Beethoven did; his short melodies are made of powerful germinal units, rhythmic and harmonic (whereas Stravinsky's germ ideas seldom coalesce into actual melodies or "themes"). Nor is there more than a trace of jazz in Bartók, nor modern satire, nor mechanistic rhythms, nor dry humor. There is no doubt that along with Berg, Schoenberg, Roger Sessions, Hindemith to some extent, Bartók is an inheritor of the nineteenth-century tradition.

Not that Bartók rates as one of those easy-to-listen-to Romantics of a more facile stamp! Far from it. On first hearing, Bartók shouts dissonance. But dissonance as the ear shrinks from it is only a misunderstanding of musical intelligence.

Therefore play Bartók not once but often, until it sinks in painlessly; until ideas, themes, expression begin to register, dissonance retreats, the sense takes hold. Then, emerging—you'll hear the ultimate conservatism of the best and highest art!

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PLUCK the proud feathers
From the peacock of Vanity.
Clip the silver fins
From the herring of self Complacency
Cut the jabbering tongue
From the magpie of Notoriety.

As a gray sparrow, without song,
Beauty or renown,
Be contented to peck the salted bread crumbs
From the frozen ground of Reality,
Not caring to identify the unseen hand
That flings the crumbs
Out of the attic window above you.

ROSA ZAGNONI MARINONI.

* * *

I wish to thank those many who have written in so generously about my September 20 recommendation of Professor Commager's article. One told me that a friend of hers had ordered 100 of the reprints! That's fine. I wrote out of enthusiasm for the article and the point of view, and if I got too hot, it's good for the system to stir up the old adrenalin once in a while. It annoys some people. It annoyed Fred Lavis of Scarsdale Lodge, Scarsdale, N. Y. (Once my father had a house in Scarsdale, after he was retired from the Army.) So I am glad to print Mr. Lavis's scream of the eagle:

> Poof Poof and again Tosh! Keep your shirt on and bathe your wrists in ice water. I was brought up under the aegis of Victoria, Disraeli, and Gladstone. I existed here under Grover Cleveland and Teddy Roosevelt. Have been a citizen of these United States for nearly fifty years. I have sailed the Scarlet Seas and lived in many of the so-called democracies and for many years under the elms of Boston Common. I have some grandchildren but have no fear for their heritage of freedom. One essential of freedom, however, is control.

I agree with Mr. Lavis that one essential of freedom is control, but not too much control. In the Soviet Union, for instance, they have too much control. As for grandchildren, I can match Mr. Lavis. I have eight grandchildren and two step-grandchildren. I want them to keep their heritage of freedom; but I see indications that they also will have to fight for it. Eternal vigilance is its price, just as it is the price of peace.

* * *

Mr. Andrei Vishinsky has given the United States a thorough shellacking, including President Truman and Secretary of State Marshall by name, and a group of people he calls warmongers. He went after Mr. John Foster Dulles with particular animosity. I always wonder how people who lay about them in that fashion would like it if the tables were turned. "Do as you would be done by" is still a copy-book maxim of considerable cogency. Mr. Vishinsky was prosecutor at the Moscow Trials, but I doubt whether his sleep is ever troubled by the remembrance of what went on then. Had I been in his boots, mine would be. At any rate he has a good deal of justification for his general indictment of war-mongering; but it has chiefly proceeded in this country from what I have previously referred to as our "gutter press," and as everyone knows the newspapers I mean, it is not necessary to specify them. As for intelligent criticism of Russia, Russia has been indulging in the most heavy-handed criticism of this country for a long time now. But because the government is communist it must always be right, and, consequently we are always wrong. Moreover, our every motive is suspect, and our best men are really crooks and blackguards. Marshall is one of our best men, but there was even a sidewise crack at Eisenhower! They are military men, yes. But, obviously, they are a whole lot more than that. The Marshall Plan is a sincere desire to succor a Europe that faces starvation and bankruptcy; and I greatly admire the *SRL*'s own Elmer Davis (he was once our editor) for keeping on plugging at the necessity of helping Europe *now*. But if there is a possibility of distorting our motives in doing anything, the official voice of the Soviet Union, through its government delegates and its press, will distort them. Well, let us keep right on anyway! It is the big main job to get Europe on its feet. It is a practical and immediate job. Intelligent people in the United States feel no malice whatsoever toward the peoples of USSR. Our most rational people have done all sorts of things to prove their hearty good will.

One book denounced by Mr. Vishinsky as American propaganda for a new war, directed first of all against the Soviet Union, is actually one of the Yale Institute of International Studies series published by Harcourt, Brace and Company. To it Frederick S. Dunn, the director of the institute, provides an introduction. I have met and talked to Mr. Dunn. He is a mild-mannered and intelligent man, and the book was designed, say the publishers, "to clear away the hysteria that has left us with the idea that our only alternatives, in the face of the atomic bomb, are immediate world government or chaos. It bases itself realistically upon the world as it is today, analyzes the nature of the weapon and its effect on military science and international relations, and points to the road the nations of the world must follow to find freedom from fear of the absolute weapon." It advocates rational planning and wise statesmanship. It is called "The Absolute Weapon" and subtitled "Atomic Power and World Order."

As Mr. Lavis advises, I will keep my shirt on. And I hope Mr. Vishinsky will put his on again! The weather is getting colder, and, in the long autumn evenings, it is better to gather around the hearth of Common Humanity, and try to be friends. We have our blatherskites, just as the Soviet Union has hers, and they make a lot of trouble between us. Bigotry always makes a lot of trouble, too, and the belief that you are absolutely right and that the other fellow is absolutely wrong. There are some pretty fine people in this country though, if you take the trouble to find them, and some of them are in the United States Government. As for hanging people who don't agree with the government—one thinks of the recent instance of Bulgaria's Petkov, —or sending millions of people off to forced-labor lagiers, or into the "free exile" of the Arctic Circle, where human souls rot to pieces in remote posiolki; that is the kind of thing the American people do not like. Neither do they really like censorship—nor the independence of the human mind, and the liberty of the human imagination, being deliberately broken down by staged trials or by secret police. They're not going to have those things over here, and they are going to continue to believe in the free expression of opinion, and in abstract justice for the individual, whatever may be the advantage, to a powerful regime, of regimented belief and speech. You see—those are our ideals. We don't always—God help us!—live up to them. And there is plenty of reason why we shouldn't feel ourselves too big for our boots. We have our own brute minds, our would-be despots, our little snake natures seething with prejudice, our "white supremacy" (God save the mark!), our anti-Semitism, our many other troubles . . . Well, perhaps Andrei needs a drink about this time. I know I do!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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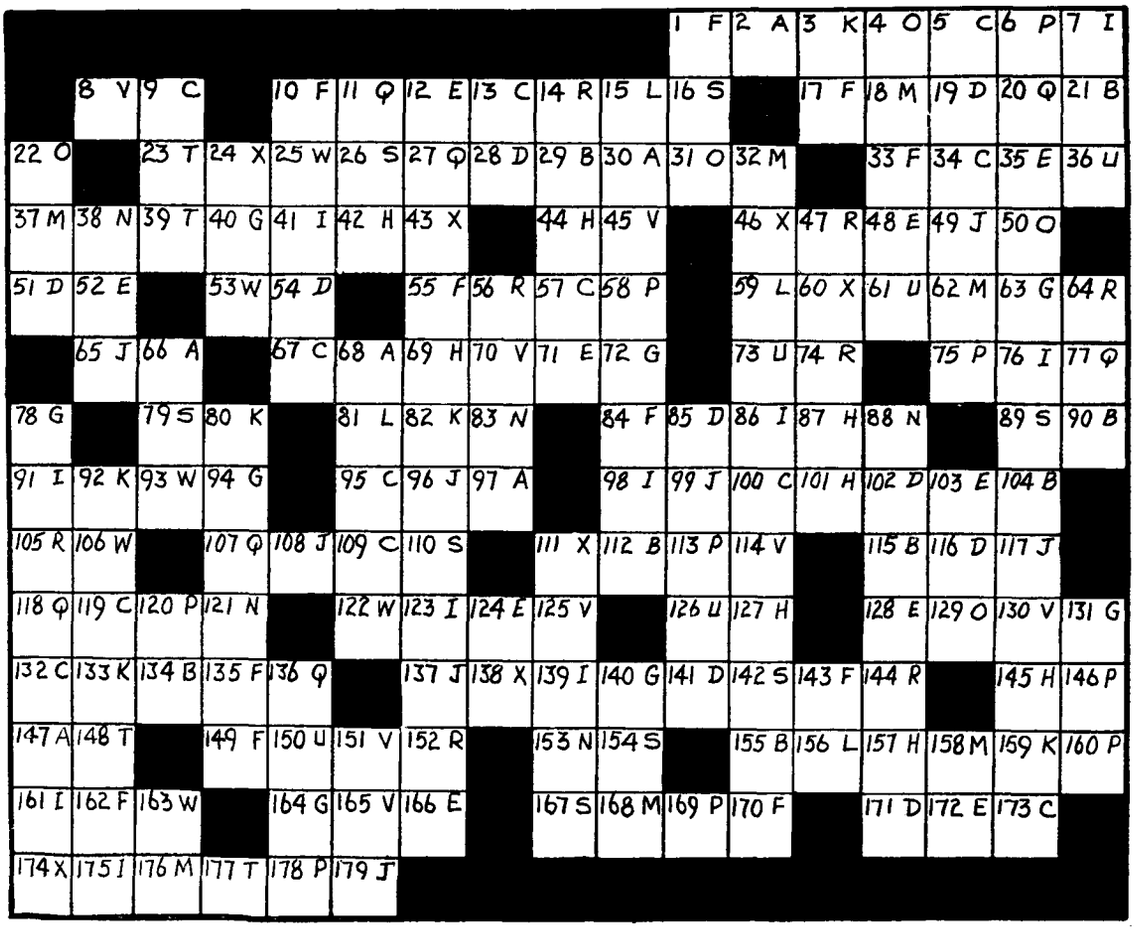
A. Historical watering place in Belgium.	66 147 97 68 2 30
B. English chronicler, who supplied basis of Arthurian legends (1100?-54).	104 90 29 155 134 21 112 115
C. To relinquish management or control (3 wds.).	173 57 5 67 9 119 132 100 109 34 95 13
D. Efferent (Anat.).	54 141 85 116 28 171 51 102 19
E. In Norse cosmology, the divisions of the universe (2 wds.).	172 12 103 48 128 52 124 71 166 35
F. Of no force, binding power, or validity (3 wds.).	143 135 149 10 1 162 170 55 84 17 33
G. English poet and physician (1721-70; "Pleasures of the Imagination").	164 78 72 63 40 140 131 94
H. Participant in a winter sport with skis, drawn over snow or ice usually by a horse (Scandinavian).	127 101 44 145 69 157 87 42
I. Formal American salutation inquiring as to one's well-being (4 wds.).	86 76 98 139 123 7 161 41 175 91
J. Place appellation of chronicler named in Word B (prefaced by "of").	49 96 179 137 99 117 65 108
K. The fish hawk.	80 159 92 133 82 3
L. Danish-born American writer and social worker in New York City (1849-1914).	15 59 156 81

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. A cutting off or suppression, esp. of a vowel, for meter or euphony.	158 37 62 32 176 168 18
N. The sum of good qualities that make character (Greek).	153 88 83 121 38
O. Inclined to exercise authority officiously (Colloq.).	4 129 50 22 31
P. In respect of appearance.	178 146 160 75 120 169 6 113 58
Q. To the full extent.	20 107 118 11 77 136 27
R. Famous Negro institute in Alabama.	74 14 105 152 56 64 144 47
S. To adorn, esp. in a petty or over-nice way.	89 26 16 79 154 142 167 110
T. English landscape painter and etcher (1849-1913).	23 39 177 148
U. Peculiar mammal closely related to the giraffe (1900, Belgian Congo).	150 61 73 36 126
V. The passively floating or weakly swimming animal and plant life of a body of water.	70 114 8 130 125 45 151 165
W. To put at a disadvantage; to get the better of (Slang; comp.).	93 25 163 53 106 122
X. Highest mountain peak in the world, 29,141 ft.	43 24 174 60 138 46 111

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 15 of this issue.

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OGDEN NASH

TAYLOR CALDWELL

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

RAYMOND SWING

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